

How to gain proximity to the Imam of the Age

Dr. Ali Haratiyan

Title: How to gain proximity to the Imam of the Age

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Urdu translator's preface

How difficult is the stage of translation! Only those who are related to this work are cognizant of this.

What is the quality of the present work? What is it, in fact? I cannot leave the judgment on the honorable critics, because I am fully aware of my worthlessness, it is only the bowl of a beggar, who is learning how to beg at the door of the repository of knowledge.

I am grateful to all my friends and mentors, through whose efforts this book has seen the light of the day and thanks be to that noble Lord who chose a less learned and sinful like me for the work of His friend (although it is impossible to thank Him as it deserves).

Was Salaam

Sayyid Liyaqat Ali

Dedicated to:

The respected aunt of Imam Zamana (a.s.), the exalted daughter of the gate of fulfillment of supplications, His Eminence Musa bin Ja'far (a.s.), honorable aunt of the eighth divine proof, Imam Ali Ibne Musa ar-Reza (a.s.).

The noble lady of Ahle Bayt (a.s.)

Her Eminence Fatima Masuma Qom (s.a.)

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Wilayat

Wilayat is an unfathomable ocean, in which every person can travel as far as he wants depending on his cognition and devotion; so much so that one can even reach upto the level of ‘from us Ahle Bayt’.

The Master of the pious, His Eminence Ali (a.s.) describes the loneliness and victimization of his last descendant in the following words:

“The master of this affair (deliverance of humanity) is that same wandering, homeless and lonely one.”¹

During the dark period of this occultation it is beneficial for the Shias and sincere believers to be reminded about the solitude of the Imam of the Age (a.s.). Therefore, seeking assistance from the respected mother of Hazrat Hujjat (a.s.), Her Eminence, Narjis Khatoon some points are mentioned briefly in this treatise regarding the loneliness of the Imam of the Age (a.s.).

The aim of writing this book is to reduce the loneliness of the Imam of the Age to some extent and to please him and during period of this loneliness let us gain the nobility of spending some moments in the court of Yusuf Zahra (a.t.f.s.).

We are saying with perfect sincerity that among the greatest implications of the loneliness of the Imam of the Age (a.s.) is that a lowly person, who is mired in sins like this humble servant, he should write about the solitude of the Imame Zamana (a.s.) and that he should mourn this historical heedlessness and also make others aware of the loneliness and victimization of Imame Zamana (a.s.) and fulfill all the rights of His Eminence and invite people to supplicate for his reappearance and to create enthusiasm among them.

15 Shaban 1426, Ali Haratiyan

¹ *Biharul Anwaar*, Vol. 51, Pg. 120.

Heartfelt desire

O my master, it is my heartfelt desire that others should call me the slave of Mahdi. It was my wish that at the time of my birth the Azaan of love should have been recited in my ears. Alas, if only I had been sacrificed on name and that the yoke of slavery to you around my neck. Alas, only if my mouth were made familiar of your name and your refuge had been with me forever.

O my master, how nice it would have been if ‘Mahdi’ were the first word to be uttered from my tongue. Alas, when I was struggling to speak, my relatives had made me say: O Mahdi!

Alas, if your recognition had been taught to me in my Nursery school. If only my teacher in the first standard of my primary school had taught the lesson of loving you and had made me practice writing your beautiful name.

During the school days no one directed me to your tent. So much so that even in higher secondary no one told me that you are the controller of the universe.

In my Geography book there is neither any information about Zee Tuwa or Razwa¹, nor my history books have made me aware of your occultation and loneliness. In religious class also I was not told that the door of Allah and the devout one of His religion² is you only. Alas, even in moral science classes we were not instructed in according respect to you.

What a pity that in drawing classes I was not taught the contours of your kindly face.

¹ Zee Tuwa is a mountain near Mecca and Razwa is a mountain on the western edge of Medina. We read in Dua Nudba: Alas, if I only knew...where is the place of your residence? Is it in Razwa or somewhere else; or is it in Zee Tuwa?

² It is mentioned in Ziyarat Aale Yasin: Peace be on you, O door of Allah and the devout one of His religion.

Why in essay writing classes instead of topics like ‘What is better, knowledge or wealth?’, I was not given something like: Imame Zamana (a.s.), his reappearance and how to please him without him there is any goodness in knowledge nor wealth.

Alas, while I was struggling to learn international languages, along with other languages, I had also been taught the language to address you, which is closest to human psychology, as he is conversant with every language and dialect; he is also fully conversant with the language of birds.¹

In chemistry class, when I am taught about the orbit of electrons in an atom, it was in fact an indication that I should understand that the whole universe, except Allah revolves around the holy being of Imam (a.s.).

Alas, if along with complicated formulae of mathematics, physics and chemistry, I was also taught the simple formula of maintaining contacts with you.

In cannot forget the story I had studied during my childhood, in which when the philosopher passed through a cemetery he saw that the ages of all those buried there was mentioned as three, four or eight years; so he asked in

¹ Abu Hashim Jafari, a companion of Imam Ali Naqi (a.s.) narrates that he was accorded the honor of meeting Imam (a.s.). The Imam spoke in the Hindi language and I could not reply to him. A bucket filled with pebbles was placed near the Imam. The Imam picked up a pebble and placed it in his mouth, then he gave it to me and I then placed it in my mouth. By God, I did not arise from there, but that I was able to speak seventy-two languages, one of them being Hindi. (*Al-Qatra*, Pg. 675; *Manaqib Shahr Ashob*, Vol. 4, Pg. 408; *Kashful Ghumma*, Vol. 2, Pg. 297.

Abu Sult also says: Imam Reza (a.s.) used to speak with people in their own tongues... Imam (a.s.) said to me in surprise: O Abu Sult, I am the divine proof on people and Allah does not appoint anyone as divine proof, who is not familiar with their languages. (*Bihaarul Anwaar*, Vol. 26, Pg. 190.).

amazement if these people had died during their infancy. He was told that only the period that one spends in acquisition of knowledge is counted in his age. If only this day my Persian teacher during conversation had mentioned the traditions about recognition of Imam¹; that according to the Shia point of view real life implies being attentive to the Imam of the Age; to love and be devoted to him and especially to declare immunity from his enemies and to keep aloof from them.

Though I was taught the intensity of light during physics classes, but I could not understand that is divine light is him only and the implication of: Allah guides to His light whoever He likes, is his holy being alone.² Though I was taught about the speed of light (300000 kms/sec) but it was not even hinted how the far the sight of the Imam can reach. I was not taught that the Imam is able to glance at all the worlds and galaxies and know about their circumstances.

When I was studying to gain admission into the university no one told me to enroll myself in the university of recognition and affection of Imame Zamana as well. No one clarified to me that there are ranks and levels of recognition of Imam as well. And most people stop at the childhood level only.

I was not aware that positions like: teacher, engineer and professor are manmade which can only obtain wealth, power, fame and position; I was unaware that there are posts higher than these.

By and by, leaving the restricted atmosphere of the college, when I stepped into the open atmosphere of the university, I found that the atmosphere was more lamentable. It was a market place of the arrogant and selfish people and the causes of

¹ The tradition: One who dies without recognizing the Imam of the Time, dies the death of ignorance, is very famous and authentic and Shia and Sunni have mentioned that it is widely narrated.

² 'Light' in Surah Nur 24:35 implies the Imam of the Age (a.t.f.s.) [*Tafsir Burhan*, Vol. 4, Pg. 72, Tr. 7643].

heedlessness were always available and ready. In the color and form of the atmosphere of western sciences, I saw that free thinking imprisoned in the chastisement of where knowledge was something that this is found in so and so European book or magazine, which is translated in America and very few points were mentioned about those sciences of Ahle Bayt (a.s.), which are in fact true heavenly sciences.

O my Master, in the university also, no one told me about yourself, no one was waving the standard of your name; no one was calling towards you. No teacher was describing your traits. Only some points about Islamic history were mentioned in Islamic class, but that also was not called as religious propagation. Only cultural programs, congregational prayers or Ziyarat journeys and Quran and Nahjul Balagha were only to the extent of prizes for competitions and not more than that. But on such occasions also, there was no discussion about his being. During those university days also we did not have your remembrance. Even after graduating from the university I was restrained from thinking about you due to the preoccupations of life and pursuits of earning livelihood.

Despite all that I at last found you in the depths of my heart. It is some time since I have found you through the eyes of my heart. Now through my complete heart, in my whole being, I feel your full blessed presence as if I am reborn. Life is not worth living without you and if someone like me, after a prolonged heedlessness, he has reached you he has the right that he should feel within himself that he is reborn. After those difficulties he has the right to request you to save him from the mischief and difficulties of the last days and he has the right that in thankfulness for this bounty he places his forehead on the ground with respect and exclaim to himself:

Praise be to Allah, one who guided us to this path and we would not have been guided had Allah not guided us.¹

Even if you search the whole world, you will not find a friend like Imam Asr (a.s.), because:

Although you may not remember him, he is not heedless of your remembrance.

Though you may desert him, he will never abandon you.

You may be unjust to him excessively, but he will not avoid making bestowals on you.

You may not supplicate in his favor, but he prays to Allah for you.

Though you may be heedless towards him, he is always attentive to you.

You may cause distress to him, but he does not become heedless to you.

Though you may not become his pride, but he is a cause of your honor and pride.

You are unaware of his circumstances, but he does not remain heedless of your circumstances.

Though you do not recognize his being and presence, but he is always present to assist you.

Although you avoid meeting him all the time, he informs you about his meeting with you.

Though you may not defend him, he never leaves you unprotected.

Although you might have disappointed him a thousand times, he is always prepared to accept your excuse.

¹ Surah Araaf 7:43.

You break your pledge to him again and again, he does not close the path that leads to him.

You have no affection for him, but he is affectionate to you. Though you are not trustworthy to him, he is the best trustee for you.

You may not be his helper, but he is always your helper and supporter.

If you provide the least service to him, he does not refrain from conveying his complete grace upon you.

Even if you have not maintained his respect, he still helps and protects you.

Even if you have not reserved his share from your funds, he does not stop your livelihood.

Although you are a useless and culprit child, he is like a kind and affectionate father.

Though you have not fulfilled his rights of brotherhood, yet he conducts with you in a brotherly manner.

Though you have deserted him alone, even then he is your helper in distress.

He is not needful of you in any condition, whereas you are completely needful of him.

Yes, O respected readers!

The secret of obtaining the bestowals of Imam Asr lies in being attentive to his sacred being. Through the mediation of the infallibles (a.s.) or through seeking mediation of His Eminence himself in the world of our heart we can call His Eminence morning and evening and see him. We should not make a mistake. The Imam is not beyond our reach, he is with us every moment; he is closer to us than our jugular vein. Imam Zamana (a.s.) is concerned with the whole humanity, and not only with any particular sect, group or community; not only with a

particular school of thought. His favor is for the common beggar as well the rich, for the learned as well as the ignorant, for the righteous as well as the sinful, so much so that it even reaches to the non-Muslims. He does not have any clerks or sentries. Whenever you make an intention your heart will find him in every place and everyone will be able to search him out. Every day, without any restriction of time, without any preparation, without any medium, it is possible to establish contact with Imam Zamana (a.s.). It is only sufficient to say once: O Master of the Time (Yaa Saahibuz Zamaan).

If we have ourselves built a wall near the ears and have deprived ourselves from hearing his inimitable voice, the lord and master is replying to our call, but we cannot hear. We have covered our eyes and deprived ourselves from his pleasing countenance, but he is looking at us. You should never say what are we in comparison to Imam Zamana (a.s.)? Is it possible for our parents to drive us away forever due to some of our mistakes? Then he is more affectionate than a father and more loving than a mother. He loves us just like a parent loves his child.

Twelve centuries of loneliness

Loneliness of Imam Asr (a.t.f.s.)

My master! My estranged and forsaken master! The afflicted one of Fatima! Captive from Aale Muhammad (a.s.)! The kind father of humanity!

I wish to mention about your loneliness, that loneliness which continues since 1200 years, that loneliness upon which the heavens and the earth shed tears, that loneliness, which even your devotees cannot understand, that loneliness, upon which your forefathers wept before your birth.

I am perplexed that from which line I should begin this panegyric. Which volume should I pick of this long book? How and what page, which line and which section should I read. This picture of grief and loneliness has made me helpless.

From where should I begin? Should I narrate this story in my words or in the words of someone else? Should I speak regarding the past generations or about the present generation? Should I complain to friends or enemies? Should I protest to the people in general or someone in particular? Should I speak about those who have aggrieved you? Should I talk about who compare your hand of affection and mercy to a hand which sheds blood? Should I complain regarding those who describe your lightning sword in such a way that even your followers begin to dread your reappearance? Or should I inform about those who say that you are beyond the reach of people? Should I speak about those who regard meeting you as impossible? Or should I mention about those who people towards themselves in your name? Or those who make people despair of your advent; and imagine the time of your reappearance to be very remote? Should I say about those who describe you in a way they like you to be and not in the way you are in fact? Should I complain about those who claim that your occultation is same as your non-existence?

My master! As if everything has paid allegiance to another that they will not allow your loneliness to come to an end. Mercenaries of Iblees are day and night in pursuit of this only. I don't know who those people are, who sincerely yearn for your reappearance. On God knows about it and you yourself. I only know this much that since your occultation 1200 years ago till today the agents of Iblees have continued to be successful. And they are helped by the mercenaries of men and jinns, who do not allow the veil to be removed from occultation and who continue make this dark night of occultation darker still.

I begin with myself as one who begins with himself the matter of reappearance will become easy for him. I wish to reconcile to you. I am certain that you will overlook my heedless past. I know that you will accept my repentance and accommodate me near you. I know that you were praying for me even during those heedless moments, days and years. I was estranged from you, but you were minding me like a loving and affectionate father. Please forgive me, please overlook my faults.

Where should I take this complaint; not only those, who are unaware of you, even the honorable believers and holy personalities cannot bear to hear your plaintive story. O God, what an extraordinary loneliness it is! How thick is the veil!

Yes, it is possible that conversation about the loneliness of Imam Asr (a.s.) may seem somewhat strange! It is possible that someone may inquire whether Imam Zamana (a.s.) is also homeless? And others might label such comparison to be ideal weakness or consider it to be the target of taste of perception and feelings of the writer and some people might regard it to be an insignificant topic other than common parlance, because most of the time we rarely speak about the victimization and loneliness of all the Holy Imams (a.s.) and regard Amirul Momineen (a.s.) to be the first victim of the world, which is absolutely correct.

Every year we remember about the afflictions and calamities that befell Lady Fatima Zahra (s.a.); we lament and

mourn and we should do that. In every calamity, we mourn the tragedy of the chief of the martyrs, Imam Husain (a.s.) and his honorable family members, which is quite appropriate.

As soon as we hear the name of Baqi cemetery, the hearts of all us brim with sorrow and grief. As soon as we are reminded of the dungeon of Baghdad, we recall the abandonment of Imam Musa bin Ja'far (a.s.) our eyes brim with tears.

We address Imam Ali Reza (a.s.) as the most forsaken one (*Ghareebul Ghoraba*), mention the tenth and the eleventh Imam by the title of Askari, because these two Imams remained in the custody of the Abbaside caliph, can there be a greater injustice than this?

But despite all this, we this we thought that this loneliness was much less than the loneliness of Imam Zamana (a.s.) or in fact, we have not thought about him. Unawareness and ignorance about the loneliness of Imam Zamana (a.s.) and heedlessness about his loneliness is in fact the victimization of Imam Zamana (a.s.).

Such strange descriptions of loneliness of Imam Zamana (a.s.) are mentioned in supplications, visitations (*Ziyaraat*) of infallible leaders and traditional reports that it makes one weep and it causes a deep pain in us and makes us aware that today the one who is truly worthy of the title of Ghareebul Ghoraba is in fact, Imam Zamana (a.s.).

At this point we shall present some Quranic verses and traditions which are related to this subject.

The period of occultation is a time of the loneliness of the Imam

Imam Amirul Momineen (a.s.) describes the loneliness and victimization of his hidden descendant in the following words:

“The master of this affair (deliverance of humanity) is that same one without any friend or helper and lonely one.”¹

It is mentioned in a traditional report that Imam Musa Kazim (a.s.) said:

“He is the spurned, the lonely, the estranged and the unseen one from his people, eager to avenge the killing of his Grandfather [Imam Husain (a.s.)].”⁽²⁾⁽³⁾

Someone asked Imam Husain (a.s.) if he was the master of the affair. He replied:

No, (it is not me), the master of this affair is one, who will go into seclusion and take up residence in a far off place; and he will seek revenge for the killing of his father.⁴

It is a pity that this loneliness of Imam Zamana (a.s.) will continue till the time of reappearance as Amirul Momineen (a.s.) has mentioned:

“Our Mahdi is alone (from the time of his birth till his reappearance).”⁵

Imam Ja’far Sadiq (a.s.) describes the circumstances of the reappearance of Imam Asr (a.s.) in the following words:

“O Mufaddal, he will reappear alone. He will enter the Masjidul Haraam alone. He will hold the curtain of the Kaaba

¹ *Biharul Anwaar*, Vol. 51, Pg. 120.

² Mautoor is avenger of the blood spilt with injustice, but he does not get the chance to take revenge. That is why we read in the Ziyarat of Imam Husain (a.s.): ‘Al-witral Mautoor’, because so far his blood and the blood of his companions is not yet avenged.

³ *Kamaluddin*, 2-361 (Chapter 34, Vol. 4).

⁴ *Kamaluddin*, 2-318.

⁵ *Mikyalul Makarim*, 1-129.

alone, in such condition that the darkness of the night would envelop everything and he would be all alone.”¹

His birth was also completely secret like that of Prophet Musa (a.s.). When he was born, the Firons of that time had planned to eliminate him.

How sad it is that the family of Imamate was compelled to conceal the birth of the seal of the successors even from his uncle and what a pity that during occultation the life of His Eminence, was spent secretly and in seclusion, he would be alone at the time of his reappearance and he will come to Masjidul Haraam also alone.

¹ *Biharul Anwar*, 53-7.

The time of occultation is the time of loneliness for the Imam and being away from the people

Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) says:

“There is a definite occultation for the master of this affair, during which he will become secluded from the people, whereas what a good place Medina is!”¹

On his deathbed, Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) made a bequest to his dear son:

“O my son, it is necessary for you that you go to a remote and secluded location, and live away from the people as there are dangerous enemies and opponents of every divine personality who create hurdles in his affairs.”²

Imam Zamana (a.s.) also mentions the desire of his father, saying:

“The covenant which my father, Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) took from me was correct that I would not reside, except in the most concealed and secluded place, so that I may keep my mission confidential and to keep myself safe from the mischief of the deviated ones of the Ummah.”³

The chief of those who prostrate, Imam Ali Ibne Husain (a.s.) says regarding Imam Asr (a.s.):

“He would have a long life like that of Prophet Nuh (a.s.). Like Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.) he would be brought up secretly and he would live in seclusion. Like Prophet Musa (a.s.), he would live in fear and occultation. Like Prophet Isa (a.s.), people would dispute regarding him. Like Prophet Ayyub (a.s.), after distress,

¹ *Athbatul Huda*, Vol. 3-445.

² *Biharul Anwar*, 52-35.

³ *Kamaluddin*, 2-447, Chap. 43, Tr. 19.

he will get relief. Like the Seal of the prophets, he would also rise up with the sword.”¹

Today, so many years have passed and that gentleman is away from sight, in an unrecognized face, he is living in a far off land and the people are unaware of his being and common favor, though by repenting and praying for his reappearance it is possible to end this deprivation.

It is found in traditions that during the period of occultation there are some responsible people, who remain in the presence of Imam Asr (a.s.) and maintain his commands and to some extent remove his loneliness and if the one of them passes away, another one takes his place; as Prophet Khizr (a.s.) is also among his companion and confidants as Imam Ali Reza (a.s.) says:

“Khizr (a.s.) drank elixir of life and will remain alive till the time of the blowing of Bugle and that those who are dying are coming to us and they salute (say salaam) us; then we hear the voice of Khizr (a.s.) but do not see him. He reaches wherever his name is mentioned. So it is necessary that anyone who remembers him should also say Salaam to him. He comes to Mecca in every Hajj, performs Hajj and stands in Arafat and says ‘Amen’ to the prayers of the faithful; that very soon Almighty Allah will make Khizr (a.s.) confidante of Qaim Aale Muhammad (a.s.); that when he (Qaim) will be hidden from the public eye he (Khizr) will be his companion in solitude.”²

¹ *Al-Muhajjatul Baidha*, (4-338).

² *Athbatul Huda*, Vol. 3-48; *Hayatul Qulub*, 1-285.

The period of occultation is the time of distress of Imam (a.s.)

The following verse of Quran:

أَمَّنْ يُجِيبُ الْمُضْطَرَّ إِذَا دَعَاهُ وَيَكْشِفُ السُّوءَ

“Or, Who answers the distressed one when he calls upon Him and removes the evil.” (Surah Naml 27:62)

In the exegesis of this verse, Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) says that this verse was revealed about His Eminence, the Qaim (a.s.). By God, he is the same distressed one, who when he prays two units of Prayers at Maqam (place of Ibrahim in the sacred mosque) and supplicates to God, He accepts his supplications and removes his distress and will make him inherit the earth.¹

Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) also says:

“By God, he [Imam Muhammad Mahdi (a.s.)] is such a distressed one, regarding whom the Almighty Allah says: “Or, Who answers the distressed one...”²

That is why we read in Dua Nudba: Where is the distressed one, who when he supplicates, his supplication is accepted?

It is mentioned in the explanation of these supplicative statements: Every person, who is holding a post, but who is kept away from this post and usurp his position, and restrain him from carrying out his functions and he is not able to use his discretion and a large number of his enemies do not want him to introduce his duties and functions; such a person is called as the ‘distressed one’. Now what would be a greater condition of distress than the divine proof and propagator of Quran and

¹ *Tafsir Qummi*, 2-129.

² *Ghaibat Nomani*, 95.

Islamic laws should be present and before his eyes the tyrant rulers and the hypocrites want to distort the Quran and to destroy the practice of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and to transform the religion of Islam and to cause distress to his followers and partisans and to make them targets of ridicule.¹

It is mentioned in the famous supplication of the first emissary of Imam Asr (a.s.) as follows:

“O my God, You are such that You remove the distress and calamities and when a person in distress calls You, You accept his supplication and you save him from distress and sorrow; so please remove the distress of Your Wali.”²

¹ *Sharh Dua Nudba*, Alawi Taliqani- 253.

² *Jamalul Usboo*: 319

Period of occultation, time of restriction for Imam (a.s.)

Some traditional reports clearly mention the ‘imprisonment’ of Imam (a.s.) during the period of occultation and in some instances statements of the Holy Infallibles (a.s.) imply his ‘imprisonment’, as Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) says:

“In the master of this affair there are four points of similarity with four prophets. Resemblance with Musa, resemblance with Isa, resemblance with Yusuf and resemblance with Muhammad (peace be on them all). The resemblance with Musa is that he shall be fearing and waiting, the resemblance with Yusuf is imprisonment, the resemblance with Isa is that it would be said regarding him that he has died while he would not be so and the resemblance with Muhammad is armed uprising.”¹

Imam Husain (a.s.) also says:

“In my ninth descendant would be the signs of His Eminence, Yusuf (a.s.) and His Eminence, Musa bin Imran (a.s.).”²

On the basis of this, the Holy Imams (a.s.) in their supplications, have prayed for the relief and success of Imam Asr (a.s.). Imam Ja’far Sadiq (a.s.) says in a lengthy supplication (which he taught to his companion, Abdullah bin Sinan) for the Ashura day:

“O God, hasten the reappearance of Aale Muhammad (a.s.) and continue Your grace upon them and save him from the hypocrites, the deviated and the malicious disbelievers.”

Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) says:

¹ *Al-Imamah wal Tabsira*-94

² *Al-Muhajjatul Baidha*, (4-338).

“In the Master of this affair there is a resemblance to Yusuf (a.s.) and it is that Allah, the Mighty and Sublime would improve and reform his circumstances overnight (The king of Egypt saw the dream and Prophet Yusuf interpreted it; after that he was released from the prison).”¹

It is mentioned in some statements of the Ziyarat of Abul Hasan Zarrab, taught by His Eminence, the Imam of the Time (a.s.) that:

“O God, please bestow deliverance to His Eminence, Mahdi (a.s.) from the tyrants.”

In the epistle to Shaykh Mufeed also, Imam Asr (a.s.) has used the term of ‘fa maa yahbisuna’ (and what has restricted us) and has regarded his being under restrictions due to the negative acts of his followers.

Moments of imprisonment during the period of occultation.

Pray that the long period is shortened.

Every moment during occultation is like imprisonment.

Please have some mercy on us devotees.

¹ *Kamaluddin*: 1-329, (Chapter 32, Tr. 12).

Period of occultation, a time of fear and apprehension

We had said that His Eminence, Imam Sajjad (a.s.) compared Imam Asr (a.s.) to Prophet Musa (a.s.) and mentioned that he would be fearful and apprehensive like Musa (a.s.).¹

Amirul Momineen (a.s.) has taught His Eminence, Kumail as follows:

“But this earth will never be without those persons who will prove the universality of truth as disclosed by Allah, they may be well-known persons, openly and fearlessly declaring the things revealed to them or they may, under fear of harm, injury or deaths hide themselves from the public gaze and may carry on their mission privately so that the reasons proving the reality of truth as preached by religion and as demonstrated by His Prophet may not totally disappear.”²

In some reports the term of ‘fearful’ is clearly used for Imam Asr (a.s.), as Imam Ja’far Sadiq (a.s.) says:

“For Imam Qaim (a.s.) there will be occultation before his reappearance.”

Zurarah says: I asked Imam (a.s.): “Why?”

He replied: “He would fear for his life.”³

One of the reasons for the apprehension of Imam (a.s.) is the possibility of his being eliminated; but this fear is not in the negative meaning of psychological tension, apprehension or fear. On the contrary, it is the possibility of absence of security; like Prophet Musa (a.s.), on the basis of absence of security, exited Egypt, as the Holy Quran says regarding this:

¹ *Al-Muhajjatul Baidha*, (4-338).

² *Nahjul Balagha*, Saying 139.

³ *Kamaluddin*: 2-481 (Chapter 44).

فَخَرَجَ مِنْهَا خَائِفًا يَتَرَقَّبُ

“So he went forth therefrom, fearing, awaiting.” (Surah Qasas 28:21)

...to see what will happen in future.

The supplication that is recited after Ziyarat Aale Yasin, in this supplication, Imam Asr (a.s.) is addressed as: The awaiting and the fearful one:

We are aware that is the divine treasure and is the gift of the glad tidings of all the prophets and he carries tremendous responsibilities, like establishment of justice in the world; that is why in any case, security of his life is also necessary and this in fact those tyrannical and oppressive people, who have straitened the life of Imam (a.s.) and His Eminence had to adopt a life of seclusion. They eliminated his forefathers unjustly one after another due to which His Eminence, Mahdi (a.s.) was compelled to life far away from the oppressors. Another reason for absence of security is lack of friends and helpers.

There could be other reasons as well for the apprehension of Imam (a.s.); like prolongation of occultation and possibility of delay in reappearance. The Imam's fear can also be due to the fact that he is worried about those believers, who become targets of difficulties and calamities during the period of occultation and are snared in the deception of Iblees and get deviated from the straight path of Imamate as the Almighty Allah says:

وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا

“And that He will most certainly, after their fear, give them security in exchange.” (Surah Nur 24:55)

Period of occultation, period of victimization

It is narrated from Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) that at the time of reappearance, Imam Muhammad Mahdi (a.s.) will send a Hashemite youth to the people of Mecca to establish the final proof and would say to him as follows:

Go to the people of Mecca and tell them: I am sent to you as a representative from so and so. He sends the following message to you: We, Ahle Bayt (a.s.) of mercy are mines of prophethood and caliphate and the family members of His Eminence, Muhammad (s.a.w.s.) and are from the sons of the prophets. We are oppressed and victimized. We have been sidelined. Since the time the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) has passed away our rights are being usurped, we request you for help; please assist us.¹

In another traditional report, the fifth Imam has mentioned the statements of Imam Asr (a.s.) when he would reappear at the Kaaba, which includes the following:

“(O people!) I make Allah a witness upon you. All those of you who are hearing my statements should convey them to others and I adjure you by the right of God, right of the Prophet and my own right, because as compared to you I am having more right of proximity to the Prophet that you support me. And to drive away from us those who have oppressed us. As they have terrorized us and made us as the pivot of injustice and oppression. And separated us from our home and children and unjustly usurped our rights and the folks of falsehood are targeting us.”²

The late Haji Sayyid Ismail Sharafi says:

¹ *Biharul Anwar*, 52-307.

² *Ghaibat Nomani*, 81.

I was on a journey of Ziyarat of the holy places. I was engrossed in the Ziyarat of the chief of the martyrs. Since the supplications of the visitor are accepted at the head side of the chief of the martyrs, I prayed to God to grant me with the glimpse of my master, His Eminence, Mahdi (a.s.)...I was engrossed in Ziyarat, when I saw the brilliant countenance of the Imam. I greeted him and then asked: My master, who are you? He replied: I am the most oppressed one of the world.¹

In the condition of mystic realization, Imam Husain (a.s.) said to a scholar of Qom: Our Mahdi is oppressed in his own time. As much as possible, speak about him and write about him. As much as you discuss about him, it is as if you have talked about the holy infallibles (a.s.). As all of them are same in infallibility, wt and Imamate; but since this period is the period of Mahdi (a.s.), you should speak about him as much as possible. Once again I emphasize that you must discuss about our Mahdi as much as possible and write about him. Our Mahdi is a victim; as much is written or read about him so far more than that should be written and read.²

¹ *Translation of Sahifa Mahdiya (a.s.)*, Pg. 58.

² *Translation of Sahifa Mahdiya (a.s.)*, Pg. 58. (Intisharat Darus Thaqlayn, fourth edition).

Period of occultation, period of awaiting

In the traditions of Ahle Bayt (a.s.) Imam Asr (a.s.) is also referred to as *Muntazir* (one who waits), though his holy being is also *Muntazar* (the awaited one) – that is one who is awaited and the hearts of the believers are restless for his reappearance and victory. Also he is in anticipation of divine command to reappear and solve the problems of the righteous and his Shia. Regarding this there is a supplication which is supposed to be recited when one leaves his place to go out for the Eid Prayers:

“O God, bless Your Wali who is waiting for Your command and who is waiting for the deliverance of Your devotees.”¹

From here it becomes clear that during the period of occultation every moment of waiting is tough and unbearable for Imam Zamana (a.s.), especially because the Imam is aware of every incident that occurs in the world and he is cognizant of the circumstances of Shia. He is conscious of the domination of injustice, oppression, infidelity and hypocrisy and on the other side, due to being in the period of occultation he is not allowed to establish justice and equity and to remove injustice and tyranny. Then it naturally becomes clear that Imam (a.s.) is all the waiting for divine command to fulfill his functions. And since the fundamental condition of reappearance is the preparedness of people and awareness and supplications about him, therefore it can be said that: Imam is awaiting for awareness and awakening to appear in his Shia.

The leader of justice, Imam Amirul Momineen (a.s.) was also aggrieved regarding the prolongation of occultation and the Imam spending his life in a concealed manner. Therefore His Eminence pleads:

¹ *Biharul Anwar*, 91-17; *Iqbalul Aamaal* quoted from *Misbah Kafami*.

“O the son of the best of the bondmaids, how long should I wait (for your reappearance)?”¹

¹ *Yanabiul Mawaddah* (Darul Uswah Publications), 3-434 (Chapter 99, Tr. 4) The author of *Yanabiul Mawaddah* has narrated (from Abul Hasan Ali bin Muhammad Madaini) in *Kitabus Siffeen*; and he has quoted from *Basharatul Islam* (Published Najaf), Pg. 80 (at the end of chapter two).
Chashm Andaaz (Afaaq Publications, second edition): 109; Quoted from *Sharh Ibne Abil Hadid*.

Period of occultation, period of being made weak

There is a verse in the Holy Quran regarding Imam Asr (a.s.) which is mentioned by one and all and was also intoned by His Eminence on the seventh day of his holy birth in the presence of his honorable father. It is the sixth verse of Surah Qasas:

وَنُرِيدُ أَنْ نَمُنَّ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اسْتُضِعُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَنَجْعَلَهُمْ أَئِمَّةً وَنَجْعَلَهُمُ الْوَارِثِينَ ﴿٥﴾

“And We desired to bestow a favor upon those who were deemed weak in the land, and to make them the Imams, and to make them the heirs,” (Surah Qasas 28:5)

It is narrated through Amirul Momineen (a.s.) regarding the exegesis of this verse:

“‘Those who were deemed weak’ implies Aale Muhammad (a). Allah will raise their Mahdi after their distress, so he will honor them and will disgrace their enemy.”¹

It is narrated from Imam Ja’far Sadiq (a.s.) that he said:

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) glanced at His Eminence, Ali (a.s.) and his both children: Hasan and Husain and observed weeping: Both of you would be weakened after me.

Mufaddal, the narrator of the tradition, says: I asked: What is the meaning of this statement? He replied:

That is after me, you would be Imams (who would be victimized) as the Almighty Allah says: “And We desired to

¹ *Ghaibat*, Shaykh Tusi, 113.

bestow a favor...” this verse would be effective in our family till Judgment Day.¹

Mustadhaf is different from ‘weak’. Weak means feeble, but Mustadhaf means one who has been weakened deliberately. Ahle Bayt (a.s.) were not and are not weak in any way.

But history is witness that the tyrant rulers always weakened them and kept them away from their rights.

In any case, those who comfort the weak and helpless ones and who assist in the affairs of all the weakened persons of the world and also regard His Eminence, Mahdi as the hope of the weakened people, they should not forget this point also that the chief of all those weakened ones is His Eminence, the master of the age himself; and if the reappearance of Imam (a.s.) takes place all the weakened people of the world would be saved.

¹ *Maaniul Akhbaar*:79

Offensive accusations: Another example of victimization of Imam (a.s.)

Perhaps you might have also seen such persons in whose view the personality of Imam Zamana (a.s.) is that of a person who is wielding sword and making river of blood to flow; who is beheading people in large numbers. More regretful is the fact that people having such opinions transfer their views to others also and they are distorting the kind and equitable personality of the Imam in the minds of people. They have made a large number of people terrified of his reappearance and stopped them from praying for reappearance.

It is a great injustice on a person, whose being is mercy, kindness and affection personified. So much so that some religious people also in jest or due to lack of attention mention negative things about Imam (a.s.); for example they talk of the Imam slaying them or other people.

In a radio program on the topic of Imam Zamana (a.s.) they conducted a survey of the students of a college of Tehran in which they were asked about their views regarding the reappearance of Imam. It was learnt that seventy percent of students would not like Imam Zamana (a.s.) to reappear. They were asked why they would not like the Imam to reappear.

They replied: If Imam Zamana (a.s.) arrives, he would eliminate all of us.

This is the juncture where one feels like weeping tears of blood and tearing up ones garment at the victimization of Imam Zamana (a.s.); can any victimization greater than this be imagined?

That kind father, not only whose friends and followers, but also whose enemies are alive through his auspiciousness, and they are breathing and getting sustenance. That merciful Imam who is more concerned than a father, more affectionate than the

mother and more helpful than a brother. That compassionate Imam regarding whom it is known that after his arrival there would be no tear in the eye of any orphan and no one will die of hunger. No one would be restless in pain. No one would remain in prison. No debtor would remain unable to repay his debts. No destitute would have sleep on any street. The table will not remain without bread. That generous Imam, who will take revenge from the oppressed and the supporter of those, who are distressed by history. That Imam about whom it is promised that he would end the afflictions, remove distress and will solve problems without any provisions; to describe such an Imam as a sword wielding man is an unforgivable crime.

If so far we have talked only about his lightning sword we should repent to the Almighty Allah and seek forgiveness from Him and be sorry for harboring such thoughts about this embodiment of mercy and kindness.

The fact is that the being of Hazrat Hujjat Ibnul Hasan Askari (a.s.) who is the seal of the successors is like that of the seal of the prophets, the mercy of all the worlds and his blessed titles: remover of calamities, the refuge¹, the widespread mercy and cave. All these titles are excessive used about His Eminence in traditional reports, supplications and Ziyarats.

In that Ziyarat Jamia Kabira, in which Imam Ali Ibne Muhammad al-Hadi (a.s.) has explained the lofty principles of the cognition of Imam, he has mentioned the Ahle Bayt of the Prophet as mines of mercy, and extremely humble and sincere, the original source of nobility, remover of grief, those who ease hardships.

The eighth Imam, Imam Ali Reza (a.s.) says:

¹ And I will complete it through his son, MHMD, in such a way that he is he would be a mercy for the whole world. (*Usul Kafi*, 1-528; Hadith Lauh) .

The Imam is a companion and a friend, is a more concerned father and brother and more affectionate than a mother to her children; and he is the refuge of people.¹

The Almighty Allah has deemed Imam Zamana (a.s.) as the refuge and defender of the helpless and weak during this period of occultation. He the savior of humanity and according to reliable traditions, he is more affectionate than all the people. He is having the best of morals and during his time he would invite people to the right religion in the most amicable manner. He would instruct them in heavenly scriptures. Through moral advice and contemporary teachings he will exhaust the argument upon everyone in every place. In such a way that if one is having the least inclination to accept truth, he would be able to achieve truth. In this way a large number of Christians and Jews would gradually bring faith in him.

But we should know that like how flowers and plants grow up, along with them some weeds also grow and hinder the growth of plants, to remove them is also necessary. To accomplish this is not possible except through the divine sword because when justice would be in power, injustice would be destroyed completely so that the oppressed history might rest in peace. The unjust people who do not come to the right path in way, who do not accept guidance at any cost and there is no possibility to reform them, it becomes necessary to remove them from the way.

Have you ever thought why his holy being is referred to as the peacock of the people of Paradise?² Perhaps one explanation of this simile is that when the peacock spreads out its wings and comes into view, it is an amazing spectacle. When His Eminence also appears he would bewilder his spectators and dazzle the intellects through his heavenly existence and his divine conduct.

¹¹ *Usul Kafi*, 1-200, Kitabul Hujjah, Miscellaneous merits and qualities of the Imams.

² *Biharul Anwar*, 51-91.

We read in some statements of the Ziyarat of Imam Zamana (a.s.):

“Peace be on you, O the spring of the hearts and the moisture of days.”

In Dua Ahad also we beseech the Almighty Allah:

“O God, populate Your lands through him and bestow a true life to Your servants.”

The Imam is the spring of heart and life and a cause of the freshness of days and the source of life and the real nature and life of man will become apparent through his reappearance and that would be the occasion when everyone would taste the real taste of life and comfort and if in fact it is as such; then as we are living at present and are making ourselves happy, what that is?

We should be certain that so far we have not become aware of those blessings which we would receive after his reappearance and we don't know that this missing Yusuf would fulfill all the needs of the world; he would bestow all goodness, blessings, favors to the human beings and when the Imam reappears we will get such gifts of affluence and faith which we cannot even imagine. Pay attention to the following traditional report:

The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) said:

“During the period of the Mahdi my nation would be bestowed blessings the like of which has never been seen.”¹

I give glad tidings of the Mahdi, who would be sent to the people of the world and the folks of the heavens and the earth would be pleased with him.²

All the nations would come under his refuge, like the honeybees take refuge with the queen bee. He would make

¹ *Muntakhabul Athar*, 473.

² *Jamiul Ahadithush Shia*, 1-34.

justice prevail in the whole world, so much so that the brilliance of the early period of Islam will return. He would not rudely awaken anyone who is asleep and will not shed any blood in an unjust manner.¹

He will make people aware of worship and divine obedience and spread justice in the whole world. The Almighty Allah would destroy falsehood through him. The beastliness and malice would be completely annihilated and he would remove the yoke of humiliation from the necks of people.²

No one would remain in need. People would have to search for those who would accept alms from them. But they would be unable to find anyone ready to accept charity. Whoever they offer monetary assistance would say that he is not in need of it.³

The birds would be chirping in their nests and the fishes would be prancing in the water. Water would once again gush out from dried up springs and the crop output of the world would double.⁴

The inhabitants of the earth and the heavens would love him as more rain would fall from the sky and the earth would be full of greenery; till the living would wish that the departed ones were alive once more to witness this justice.⁵

The rain mercy will descend from the sky. No seed will remain under the earth without germinating. On this day wealth would be showered upon everyone. In such way that anyone who says: O Mahdi, give me; he would be told: You may take whatever you like.⁶

¹ *Muntakhabul Athar*, 478.

² *Biharul Anwar*, 51-104.

³ *Musnad Ahmad*, 2-53.

⁴ *Biharul Anwar*, 52-304.

⁵ *At-Tashreef bil Minan*, 146.

⁶ *Iqdudd Durar*, - 195, Chapter 7.

Amirul Momineen (a.s.), His Eminence, Ali Ibne Abi Talib (a.s.) says:

When a man from my progeny shall reappear, such ease would be created in the issues of people that even the dead shall visit each other and convey the glad tidings of his reappearance.¹

“When our Qaim reappears, the sky will send down rain and the earth will expose its treasures. Malice and hatred shall disappear from the hearts of the people; beasts and animals will live in amity. So much so that a lady will travel to Iraq and Syria walking only on greenery and grass and wearing her ornaments and no beast will frighten her.”²

“When the Mahdi will reappear, he would be wearing a garment like that of Amirul Momineen (a.s.) and he would follow exactly the conduct of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.).”³

It is mentioned in some traditional reports that through the auspiciousness of the advent of Imam Zamana (a.s.) and through his conduct, he would remove poverty and needfulness from the people and make them needless of material wealth. The will say:

“Come to that for which you used to break off relations, shed unlawful blood and commit sinful acts.”

Then he would give them so much money as none had ever paid before.⁴

According to authentic traditional reports all the maladies would be cured. The blind would regain sight. There would be rain in plenty; no patch of land would remain but that it would become verdant. As if a green carpet is spread on the whole earth. All the trees would put forth fruits. The bodies will

¹ *Kamaluddin*, 2-653, (Chapter 57, tradition. 17).

² *Mikyalul Makarim*, 1-101.

³ *Biharul Anwar*, 54-47; *Kafi*, 1-141.

⁴ *Ghaibat Nomani*, 342.

become whole and healthy and life spans would be prolonged and exceed a hundred years. The speed of time will slow down more than ten times. The farmer will get more produce from his land. Malice will be removed from every heart and people would become kind towards each other. Not only would human intellect become perfect, but even the ferocity of wild beasts would go away, till the sheep and the wolf and the lion and the cow would live in amity. There would be excess of wealth and emotions like malice, greed and jealousy would disappear to such an extent that no beggar would be found to accept charity.

Children would play with snakes and scorpions and they would not be harmed. All the evils would be destroyed and all the people will worship God with perfect sincerity and will not associate anyone with Him.

All the geographical boundaries would be removed and the whole world would come under one rule and government. Whenever a person would like, he would be able to travel anywhere in the east or the west without any restriction. No one would restrain him, and why it should not be so? Did the Almighty Allah not create the whole universe and all living beings as offering for this household? In Hadith Kisa, we read the statement of the Almighty Allah:

“O My angels! O Residents of My Heavens, verily, I have not created the erected Sky, the stretched earth, the illuminated moon, the bright sun, the rotating planets, the flowing seas and the sailing ships, but for the love of these Five lying underneath the cloak.”¹

And the reminder of the point is also not without subtlety as according to the traditional report most of the blood shedding in the world would be before the reappearance and that would be due to the battles between superpowers of the world for gaining supremacy. As it is mentioned by Imam Ali Reza (a.s.):

¹ Addenda to *Mafatihul Jinaan*, Hadith Kisa.

“Such bloodshed would occur before the advent of the Qaim that it will not abate even for a moment.”¹

Although we do not deny the armed uprising of His Eminence as this point is emphasized in numerous traditional reports; but it is definite that the sword of Imam Asr (a.s.) would only fall on those who have repeatedly strangled justice and shed the blood of the innocent oppressed and the helpless persons; those who fought the holy personalities; as such people do not understand anything, except the language of violence.

There is no proof that the common people who walk in streets and markets and who struggle to fulfill their needs and obtain their livelihood, if they commit a mistake on the basis of unawareness or heedlessness or deception, it is definitely not deserving of being punished by God or the Wali of God, then such people would be terrified of reappearance. No proof is found for this. Because after the reappearance of His Eminence, Mahdi (a.s.) not only the majority of Shia would welcome him, on the contrary the majority of the people of the world due to their chaste nature and after observing the conduct of His Eminence would be attracted to him and will embrace faith on his hands.

It is natural that only those, who are mired in polytheism and hypocrisy, would be terrified of the Imam (a.s.) and his reappearance like in case of Bani Abbas rulers (just like Firon was terrified of Musa). They imposed restrictions on the eleventh Imam (a.s.) and put him under house arrest thinking that through these steps they will be able to stall the birth of the promised Imam and were prepared to martyr the heavenly son.

Along with different comparisons in the reports of the Holy Imams (a.s.) it is mentioned about ‘new matter’ which the Imam will bring with himself after his reappearance it clarifies that so far the real Islam has not reached the people.

¹ *Biharul Anwar*, 52-152; quoted from *Qurbul Asnaad*.

If a teacher does not come to a class due to some reason and does not teach his book would it be correct that when he comes to the class the second time he should take a test about that lesson which he has not taught? Would the kindest teacher of humanity who is to appear for complete salvation, guidance and training; can such a thing be expected from him? It is correct that Imam (a.s.) would severely take to account the leaders of injustice and oppression, but the Imam would guide the majority of the people who are victims of those oppressors.

The mention of fear from the sword of the Imam, especially in Shia society, is found in a strange manner. One cannot understand why we are so terrified while we are all the time seeking the mediation of Imam Asr (a.s.) and the other Imams (a.s.) and they despite being aware of our circumstances and cognizant of our sins, mistakes and errors how they conduct with us and they do not drive us away from their court and they fulfill our needs; inspite of all that grace and kindness what can be the reason of our being so much terrified of our infallible Imam?

On the night of Ascension, the Almighty Allah said to His Prophet regarding His Eminence, Mahdi (a.s.):

“He would make My lawful, lawful and make My unlawful as unlawful. Through him would I take revenge from My enemies. On his arrival, the friends of God and the servants of God will get relief and the pained hearts of his Shia will be cured.”¹

Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) says to Ibrahim Karkhi:

“O Ibrahim, the reliever of the pains of the Shia will come after severe hardships, long trials and anxiety and fear.”²

It is amazing how we can believe that this kind leader, who prays for his sinful followers in the court of God and who would

¹ *Biharul Anwar*, 36-245.

² *Biharul Anwar*, 51-144.

arrive so that he may cure the troubled hearts of his Shia and to remove sorrow and grief from them; immediately after reappearance he would start eliminating them. Sayyid Ibne Tawus says that he heard the following supplication from the Imam of the Time (a.s.) at dawn in the Sardab (Samarrah):

“O God, our Shia are the reflection of our effulgence and they are created from our left over essence. They have committed sins in excess, relying on our love and Wilayat. If those sins are related to me (right of God), please overlook them as in that case it would be a reason of our pleasure and if they have committed excess among themselves, please make amend and give them my share of Khums as well so that they might be pleased and admit them into Paradise and save them from hellfire and do not gather them and our enemies together in Your chastisement and fury.”¹

It is definite that Imam Asr (a.s.) is concerned about all the Shia (who are like his spiritual sons) of which numerous examples are found in the traditional reports of infallibles; like it is said:

“We are happy in your happiness and aggrieved in your grief.”²

The Eighth Imam says:

“No one from our Shia falls ill, but that we also fall ill in his illness and none feels aggrieved, but that we are also aggrieved with him and none feels happy, but that we are also elated in his happiness.”³

We should remember that by these statements we are not making people inclined to sins, because the sins of the Shia distress Hazrat Sahibuz Zaman, but this obvious point should

¹ *Biharul Anwar*, 53-302; Jannatul Maawa, Anecdote 55.

² *Biharul Anwar*, 140 & 154; Quoted from *Basairud Darajaat* and *Mashariqul Anwaarul Yaqeen*.

³ *Biharul Anwar*, 14-46: 140 Quoted from *Basairud Darajaat*.

always be kept in mind that all the companions of His Eminence, Amirul Momineen (a.s.) were not of the same caliber as that of Salman, Abu Zar and Miqdad and all the friends and students of Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) were not like Zurarah and Hisham bin Hakam, because among the followers of the Holy Imams (a.s.) there were righteous as well as the sinful, the just as well as the transgressors; did the Imams forsake those of his followers, who were sinful or did they lift the sword over them? The reply to this is definitely: No.

So much so that some traditional reports give precedence to the Shia and followers of Imam Asr (a.s.) over that of the followers of other Imams, because those people lived during the lifetime of the respective Imams and they were able to apparently gain from their blessed existence and they could make inquiries from him directly; Ziyarat of the Imams was possible for them, but during this period of occultation the Shia are like that child, whose affectionate father has proceeded on a journey, thus he is left unprotected.

Sayyid Hallawi¹ complains to Imam Asr (a.s.) about the difficulties and distress of the Shia in a panegyric and recited this in a number of gatherings. A respected personality of Najaf Ashraf who had the honor of meeting Imam Asr (a.s.), was told by the Imam: Tell Sayyid Haider: Do not make me so restless; it is not within my means. It is upto Allah. Continue to pray that may Allah facilitate my reappearance.²

In other words, we should avoid criticizing the holy being of His Eminence, Mahdi (a.s.) and we should not create his unreal and harsh image in the minds of people and refrain from frightening his friends and justice loving people of the world.

¹ Sayyid Haider bin Sayyid Sulaiman Hilli (1246-1304) is regarded as the most famous poet of the history of Shia.

² *Biharul Anwar*, 53-331 (*Jannatul Maawa*, Al-Faidatuth Thaniya).

To create an atmosphere of terror among the people regarding the reappearance of Imam (a.s.) through human Satanism is just like some anti-social persons deviate a youth and distance him from his family and make him tread an evil path and whenever this youth wants to return to his family, he is told: If you return your father would punish you and it is also possible that he would kill you.

Satanic agents have directly deprived the humanity from spending their lives under the shade of their ideal father and thinking that they should not go back they have terrified him through the sword.

Our self-made deprivation

Deprivation: Due to heedlessness about the Imam

One hundred and twenty-four thousand divine prophets were appointed for the guidance of humanity. In exchange, what did people do to those holy envoys? Some they sawed into two pieces! Some they threw alive into the fire! Some they beheaded in an oppressive manner. Some they labeled as insane or sorcerer and some they falsified; and except for some believers there was no one who believed in them.

The eleven oppressed and infallible Shia Imams were also martyred one after another by the tyrant rulers in an oppressive manner.

Now there is only one support before the world of humanity; only one savior of humanity remains; other than him there is no other way of salvation; therefore it is necessary to obtain the refuge of this remnant of God on the earth (who is the heir of the perfections of the prophets and divine saints and also their fruit) and to attach ourselves to the holy court of this great Imam (who is the guide and the guided one).

A great tragedy of the Shia society is that generations after generations, it continues to become heedless of the occultation of the Imam and this important issue is habitually adopted. Many people think that the occultation of the Imam of the Age and its continuation is a destined matter and role of the opponents and supporters does not have any effect on the actual occultation and its prolongation.

It is very important to pay attention to this basic point that the Almighty Allah created human beings with a free will and discernment of the right and the wrong. If this had not been there reward and punishment would have been meaningless and

Paradise and hell, accounting of deeds would be vain; the sinners would not have been answerable and they would not have been punished. And the righteous people would not be deserving of rewards. That is why the Almighty Allah did not compel the people to accept the call of the prophets. And the divine messengers also continue to employ glad tidings and warnings. Same was the conduct of the Holy Imams (a.s.). We can even say that if the prophets were appointed for spreading divine message and guiding the people, this stage was exactly opposite in the case of the Imams.

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Attachment is the only means of success

In the traditions that have reached to us from our Imams the Imam is compared to the Holy Kaaba. People bear the discomfort of traveling to visit the House of God and they sincerely circumambulate the Kaaba; but the Kaaba never goes out to visit anyone.

Whatever Allah, the mighty and high and our infallible guides have told us about the martyrdom of Imam Husain (a.s.) or the occultation of Imam Asr (a.s.) before his birth, that how the people would conduct with him, or what would happen to them; they have only given information about it, which does not mean that we believe in forced destiny and begin to imagine that this would come to pass definitely, because it is possible that the aim of making those statements was to awaken the people and before the actual occurrence of those events, they might mend their ways. It is just as a kind father advises his son and warns him of the harms of wayward friends and selection of wrong paths.

It is regrettable that some think that Imam Asr (a.s.) has gone into occultation by way of a definite decree of destiny and as long as God likes, he would remain in occultation and meanwhile we should continue to act on our individual obligations. Some people say that when Allah wants the Imam would reappear and reform the world and others say: At present the world is not ready and the ground is not prepared for him and it is also not known that when he would arrive.

These two groups should be told: If it is such that the reappearance of Imam Zamana (a.s.) is not related to the supplication of some religious persons then why in the supplications of the Holy Imams (a.s.) there is so much emphasis on praying for the reappearance of the savior of humanity? Is it not emphasized as a divine practice in the Holy Quran?

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّى يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ

“Surely Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change their own condition.” (Surah Raad 13:11)

His Eminence, Amirul Momineen (a.s.), during the last days of his life he predicted to one of his companions that the end of turmoil shall be in the 70th year of Hijra. And he warned him about the afflictions that people would suffer.¹

That is why during the lifetime of Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.), Abu Hamza Thumali asked the Imam: His Eminence, Amirul Momineen (a.s.) had said there would be ease in the seventieth year then this has not happened? Imam (a.s.) replied: If people had been attentive to the Imam of their time the matter would have reached its actual destination; that is it would have returned to the Imamate of the Imam, but due to the fact that Imam Husain (a.s.) was deserted all alone this matter was postponed till 140 A.H. Then this year also did not maintain confidentiality and did not fulfill the promise made to Imam Zamana (a.s.) postponed the matter further and now there is no fixed time for it.²

Those causes on the basis of which mankind deprived itself from a great divine blessing, they are too many which cannot all be enumerated here. It is a fact that the point of much greater calamity and deprivation began regarding the successorship of Imam Ali (a.s.), ignoring the command of His Eminence, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.); confining the gate of the knowledge of the Prophet to his home; burning down the door of the house of Lady Fatima Zahra (s.a.); all these are calamities whose consequences mankind is suffering till date. It is correct that some people in greed of power opened the Pandora box of Saqifah, but whoever remained quiet about it, is also a partner in

¹ Biharul Anwar, 42/223.

² Biharul Anwar, 4:114.

confining Amirul Momineen (a.s.) to his place and in burning down the door of Lady Fatima Zahra (s.a.).

In this way, with the usurpation of caliphate mankind fell into a great calamity.

That is why many times in Ziyarat Ashura (which is the manifesto of immunity of Shia) is mentioned aloofness and hatred to the usurpers of the rights of Muhammad and Aale Muhammad (a.s.) (which is in fact a great injustice towards mankind).

If the Holy Imams (a.s.) continued to be martyred at the hands of the tyrant rulers in an oppressive manner, and His Eminence, Mahdi (a.s.) also went into occultation from the tyrants and people, it was not due to divine destiny, on the contrary it was due to the choice of the people.

Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) says in a traditional report:

Definite divine destiny is that if He bestows a blessing to someone, He allows it to remain with till he does not commit a sin, which becomes a cause for the disappearance of that blessing.¹

Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) also said:

“If the Almighty Allah is infuriated at the people He removes us [Ahle Bayt (a.s.)] from among them.”²

That which should not have occurred, happened and mankind washed its hands from a great bounty. As a result of which this self made deprivation continues to the present.

Now, what are we supposed to do? What is way of escape from this calamity? How can we save ourselves from the deprivation brought by our own hands? How can we leave the

¹ *Tafsir Ayyashi*: 2, Surah Raad: Verse 11.

² *Usul Kafi*, 1/343 (Kitabul Hujjah, Chapter of occultation, 80, Tr. 31).

darkened path of the period of occultation and reach the illuminated world of reappearance?

How can we bring back the true life? Is it possible to keep the ointment on this wound for 1400 years and cure it?

When such are the circumstances the best way is to refer to the statements of the family if divine revelation and messages of the savior of the world; through good fortune and pleasure of God our concerned and kind Imams (a.s.) since the beginning of Islam, especially Imam Zamana (a.s.) since the beginning of his occultation specified the path of salvation and since the guidance is a responsibility of the Imam, therefore the Imam never failed to provide guidance.

There is no doubt that acting on those rules will create a path to salvation and success in this closed way and self made deprivation and will guarantee success. And in it lies our respect of the world and the hereafter and the foremost conditions of the hereafter being good and means of treading the straight path, because spirit of Shiaism can be defined as obedience of ones Imam without any questioning.

Signs on the path of salvation

If our aim is to obtain causes for hastening of reappearance and days of meeting His Eminence, the Imam of the Time (a.s.) we should ponder over the epistles received from the Imam, true dreams, divine realizations and those who had the honor to meet the Imam. When we do this we will get three types of guidance regarding Imam (a.s.):

- 1) Period of the Minor occultation.
- 2) Period during which Shaykh Mufeed (a.r.) received letters from Imam Zamana (a.s.).
- 3) Period after the arrival of those letters till date.

Statements of Imam Zamana (a.s.) during the period of the Minor Occultation

During the period of Minor occultation Imam Zamana (a.s.) addressed all Shia s follows through his second special emissary, Muhammad bin Uthman (r.a.):

“Pray more the reappearance as in it lies your felicity”¹

Two important points are present in this statement:

1- Excess of Prayer: That is we should not be content with a little supplication and praying for a short while and it is a fact that those who await his reappearance, the awaiting does not make them despair and they do not worry of the desire for reappearance.

2- Ease and felicity in all matters is possible only through the reappearance of Imam (a.s.).

It is mentioned in *Mikyalul Makarim*:

¹ *Kamaluddin*, 2-485 (Chapter 45, Tr. 3); *Ihtijaj*, 2-499.

“Also that which supports this point is the dream of a reliable and pious lady in my acquaintances who is very much aggrieved at the dominance of infidels over Muslim countries. The gist of the dream is as follows: It was heard that a person said: If a believer is regular in *Dua* for early reappearance of his master after prayers just as he prays for himself, when he is sick or indebted, in such a way that the separation of His Eminence (a.s.) should be a source of sorrow, grief, distress and restlessness, in that case his *Dua* will be cause of one of the two things: either his master will reappear sooner or that his sorrow and distress will be replaced by happiness and joy and his distress and sorrow would be removed. And that he would be delivered from hardships and calamities.”¹

Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) said to Ahmad bin Ishaq:

“By Allah! He will have an occultation and none shall be safe from destruction but one whom Allah has kept steadfast in the belief of his Imam and given the divine opportunity (*Taufeeq*) to pray for his reappearance.”²

If the instruction issued by Imam Zamana (a.s.) during the period of the Minor Occultation had been followed, we would have got relief from the deprivation, which was definitely brought upon ourselves; but alas, but his commands were not obeyed and in this way the occultation prolonged. Also, if people had acted according to the epistle of the Imam to Shaykh Mufeed, they would have achieved success and there would not have been delay in meeting the Imam. But what a pity, till date, the Shia have not acted according to those instructions as they should have acted and they did not adopt the solitary path of felicity which can be achieved through certainty in the Imamate of Imam Asr (a.s.) and supplicating for an early reappearance.

¹ *Mikyalul Makarim*, 1:460.

² *Kamaluddin*, 2:384 (Chapter 38, Tr. 1).

Epistle of Imam Zamana (a.s.) to Shaykh Mufeed (r.a.)

This epistle was received during the initial period of the Major Occultation by Shaykh Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin Noman Mufeed (r.a.) (who is regarded as the greatest Shia jurist in history). The point worth noting is that in this epistle, the Imam has called that period (of ninety years till the time of Shaykh Mufeed) as ‘delay’ and has called attention to very important points. Since this letter is very much detailed, we hint at only a part of it:

“If our Shia, may Allah help them in His obedience, had been loyal to the pledge taken from them, the bounty of our meeting them would not have been delayed. And the honor of meeting us would have perfected their recognition earlier. Thus the only things that keep us hidden from them are those same matters that reach us about them that do not please us and which we don’t expect from them.”¹

This part of the letter contains two important points:

1- Shortcoming in obedience and loyalty to Imam Zamana (a.s.).

2- Committing of sins by the Shia.

It is very important to remind that the source of all sins regarding Imam Zamana (a.s.) is non-fulfillment of our duties.²

This epistle was issue at the end of the year 412 A.H. and today after a passage of more than a thousand years, till date what gathering and what unity his taken place to fulfill this covenant which the Shia have made to their Imam?

It is a pity, our shortcoming and lack of fulfillment of the divine covenant has deprived the Shia and the mankind from this

¹ *Biharul Anwar*, 53-176.

² Tradition of the Prophet – as was mentioned before.

great blessing and this heedlessness still continues. Imam (a.s.) also said:

“Deriving benefit from me during the period of occultation is like benefiting from the sun when it is behind the clouds.”¹

In the light of this statement of His Eminence, the cause of the concealment of the sun should be searched for in the clouds, otherwise the sun, due to its nature is always visible. That sun of Imamate whose existence itself is grace personified. It is the people who do not express willingness to accept a divine government and due to committing sins we conceal his noble being behind the dark curtains of our heedlessness and disobedience. That is why Shaykh Tusi (r.a.) says:

“We should not imagine the occultation of Imam Zamana (a.s.) to be due to the Almighty Allah or the Imam himself.”

Further on Shaykh Tusi (r.a.) says: Since the destruction of truth and fear of disobedience of people to him is reason for occultation, therefore when this cause will go away and people would become inclined to his obedience and submit to him reappearance would be definite.²

The statement of Khwaja Nasiruddin Tusi (r.a.) regarding this is very famous:

“The existence of the Imam is a divine favor and his guiding the people is another divine favor; and his occultation is because of us.”³

The final word for this comparison is the heavenly statement of Lady Fatima Zahra (s.a.) in which the silence of people and their practical lack of perception is condemned due to which Amirul Momineen (a.s.) had to remain confined to his home.

¹ *Kamaluddin*, Vol. 2, 485 (Chapter 45, Tr. 4); *Biharul Anwar*, 53-181.

² *Biharul Anwar*, 52: 92, Tr. 7.

³ *Kashful Murad*, 362.

“The Imam is like the Holy Kaaba to which people go and it does not go to the people.”¹

Imam Zamana (a.s.) is the Kaaba of humanity. It is the duty of mankind to focus its attention upon him for their well being in the world and the hereafter and to circle him like moths circle the candle. Does any path of success remains for mankind, except for obedience of God and submitting to the command of the Almighty Allah and except to return to Ahle Bayt (a.s.)?

¹ *Biharul Anwar*, 36:353.

Loneliness in occultation

Since the people did not act according to the path shown by Imam (a.s.) during the period of major occultation in the epistle to Shaykh Mufeed (r.a.) we say that the grief of Imam (a.s.) continues to increase. Feeling of loneliness and victimization and evil heedlessness and lack of recognition from the side of the Shia impelled Imam Ali Reza (a.s.) and the folks of the heavens and the earth to weep.¹ It is true that many Imams (a.s.) ten years before the birth of Imam Zamana (a.s.) or perhaps a hundred years ago had wept on his victimization and occultation.

Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) was seen seated on the ground and weeping like a woman who has lost her child and tears were flowing on his cheeks and he was saying:

“O my dearest one! Your concealment has taken away the sleep from my eyes and has made me extremely anxious. I have no peace at all...O my dearest one! Due to your occultation, a terrible calamity has struck me, to get relief from it is very difficult.”²

Do you know that in the traditional reports of infallibles (a.s.) the Shia and followers of Ahle Bayt (a.s.) are encouraged to pray for the early reappearance of the promised one of Aale Muhammad (a.s.)? During the long period of 1100 years of this major occultation injustice and oppression, sins and heresies are created in the world and every blood that is being shed unrightfully and every tear that flows from the eye of an orphan

¹ Imam Ali Reza (a.s.) says: The occurrence of an event is definite in which serene and reliable persons will waver. This test will occur at a time when the third divine proof from my descendants will come into this world, whom the Twelver Shia will lose, upon whom the folks of the heavens and the earth will weep.” Refer to the remaining part of the report from this extract. *Kamaluddin*, Vol. 2, Page. 370; *Ghaibat Shaykh Tusi*, Pg. 283.

² *Biharul Anwar*, Vol. 51, Pg. 219.

or is falling from the eye of an oppressed one and every sigh that is emanating from the heart of a distressed person all of them are witnessed by that Imam and all these things are making his aggrieved heart more aggrieved; is it not so? Is it not true that the calamities, tragedies and victimization of the last divine proof are more than the sorrows of all other members of Ahle Bayt (a.s.)?

Though the sorrow and grief of the honorable (grand)mother of Imam seated in the House of Sorrow (*Baitul Huzn*) upon the passing away of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) was indeed very deep, but it did not continue for more than two months. The loneliness of Amirul Momineen (a.s.) and his confinement at home was for around a fourth of a century (25 years). The life of imprisonment of Imam Musa Kazim (a.s.) is recorded as maximum 21 years, but even today when more than 1171 years have passed since the birth of Imam Asr (a.s.) and the more valiant and daring person on the face of the earth is living in occultation and loneliness.

“What patience, what steadfastness and what strength! How long and painful is the wait!”

It is natural that when the member of a family is involved in some hardship, his clansmen or people of community are present at every step to assist him. They bear difficulties for him, run about to solve his problems; they forget their status and glory only that he may get relief from his problems. Such things are often witnessed in the world.

But is not a teaching of Shia religious belief that the Imam of our time is dearer to us than life, wealth, heart, parents and children? Do we not read in Ziyarat Jamia Kabira:

“My parents, self and property, family are all sacrificed on you.”?

So, let us take an oath to shun sins and by praying for the reappearance of His Eminence, break the lock of the prison of

occultation and release our master who is dearer to us than our lives.

Again and again it is seen that when a child or a member of a family is late in returning home all the relatives are worried and anxious and fearing that perhaps some accident has taken place they go out in his search. Pause and think how anxious is the Shia society upon delay in reappearance of the last divine proof?

We have seen and heard that if some member of any family is killed in an unjust manner without any fault his relatives seek retaliation from the killer as early as possible and they are not prepared to accept anything else. So that they may in any way get some satisfaction. If the blood which is shed is the blood of God and the dear one of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.), the blood of the chief of the ladies of the worlds and folks of Paradise and the blood of the chiefs of Paradise and his descendants and relatives, his friends and Ahle Bayt of infallibility and purity; then what should we do?

Do we not read in Dua Nudba that our master, Hujjat Ibnul Hasan is the avenger of the blood of the martyred one in Kerbala and one who will take revenge of the blood of Lady Fatima Zahra (s.a.)?

It is mentioned in the statements of Allamah Amini that when the door of the house crashed on the side of Lady Fatima Zahra (s.a.), she called out in pain and sorrow: O my child...Mahdi! Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) says: We have in our possession the leftover firewood which was used to burn down the house of our grandmother, Lady Fatima Zahra (s.a.). They have passed from one Imam to another and will continue till they reach to Imam Qaim (a.s.).¹

Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) says:

¹ *Sharh Dua Simaat*, Haaj Shaykh Ali Akbar Nahawandi, 192.

One of our rights on our Shia is that after every obligatory Prayer the right hand should be raised and kept on the chin and say three times:

“O Lord of Muhammad, hasten the reappearance of Aale Muhammad (a.s.).”

“O Lord of Muhammad protect the religion in the occultation of Muhammad.”

“O Lord of Muhammad, take revenge for the daughter of Muhammad.”¹

Dibil Khuzai who was a great valiant in the history of Shia and a very famous poet, he recited his Taiya Qasida² in the presence of Imam Ali Reza (a.s.):

The grave of a member of Ahle Bayt (a.s.) is in Baghdad which is purer than the entry of breath [that is Imam Musa Kazim (a.s.)]. The Almighty Allah has bestowed to him a place in Paradise.

Imam Ali Reza (a.s.) said: Would you like me to add two more lines to your panegyric so that your composition is complete?

Indeed, O son of Allah’s Messenger, said Dibil.

Imam (a.s.) recited as follows:

“A grave is present in Toos as well and how afflicted it is! Such an affliction that may burn down the being of a person. And it would continue till the Almighty Allah sends the Qaim from us Imams. He would remove our distress.”³

This traditional report shows how much importance Imam Ali Reza (a.s.) accorded to the hastening of the reappearance of Imam Zamana (a.s.).

¹ *Sahifa Mahdiya*, 195.

² A panegyric comprising of lines which end at the letter ‘T’.

³ *Uyunul Akhbaar Reza*, 2:267.

In Ziyarat Nahiya, Imam Asr (a.s.) addresses Imam Husain (a.s.) as follows:

“O my deserted Grandfather! If I was sent to the world much later and the hand of destiny kept me away from rendering assistance to you, and I was unable to wield my sword on those who were inimical to you, (in this regret) I weep for you day and night and instead of tears I shed tears of blood.”¹

Today 1364 years have passed since the heart rending tragedy of Kerbala, today also the grief and martyrdom of the descendants of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and the captivity of the household of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) and especially the captivity of the embodiment of patience and valor, lady Zainab (s.a.) causes tears and blood to flow from the eyes of our master. When our Wali laments upon the chief of the martyrs, what is our responsibility?

Do we not wish to do something to end the lamentation and grief of Imam Zamana (a.s.)? Should we not pray for an early reappearance of Imam Zamana (a.s.) so that he may take revenge from the killers and enemies of Aale Muhammad (a.s.)?

The author of *Mikyalul Makarim* writes: If *Dua* for the early reappearance of our master, the Master of the Time (a.t.f.s.) is having the same reward then this much is enough for its excellence and greatness, though it is having innumerable rewards and merits. As for the point that it earns the reward of avenging the blood of Imam Husain (a.s.): Indeed, avenging the blood of His Eminence is the duty of every believer, but it would be fulfilled through Imam Zamana (a.s.) as Imam Husain (a.s.) is the real father of the Imam.

¹ *Sahifa Mahdiya*, 584.

Victimization of Imam Asr (a.s.) in his own words

Late Haji Shaykh Muhammad Ja'far Jawadi met Hazrat Baqiyatullah (a.s.) in the state of mystic rapture or consciousness and noticed that the Imam was aggrieved. When he inquired about it, he said:

“My heart is turning into blood... My heart is turning into blood...”

Late Haji Muhammad Ali Fashandi says:

I had arrived in Qom with my wife and I was sitting in Masjid Jamkaran performing the ritual (Aamaal). I saw a man with an illuminated countenance enter and walking towards the Masjid. I said to myself that the illuminated face of the Sayyid on this hot summer day was tired. So I offered him a cup of water. He drank the water and when he returned the cup, I said: Please pray to Allah to create ease for Imam Zamana (a.s.) so that the reappearance may occur sooner, he said:

“Our Shia do not love us even to the extent of offering water to us! If they wished they would have prayed for me so that the time of our reappearance had arrived.¹

A pious and famous scholar of Najaf Ashraf went to Kerbala and in the shrine of the chief of the martyrs; he met His Eminence, Mahdi (a.s.), who told him:

“O man, look here that (besides the sepulcher and under the dome of my deserted grandfather) where supplications are accepted, no one is attentive to me and no one is praying for my reappearance.”

Then His Eminence displayed the power of his Wilayat made this pious aware of the desires and needs of people in

¹ *Shaifatgan Hazrat Mahdi (a.t.f.s.):* 1-155.

which everyone was praying for his personal needs. Imam (a.s.) said: did you hear, there is not even one from the visitors who might be saying: O God, please hasten the reappearance of Mahdi.¹

¹ Mujalla Maoodash:13, Maqala Agha Hashimi Nezaad.

Fragrance of reappearance

A person was run down by a car and he lost both his feet. He came to Masjid Jamkaran to seek cure through the mediation of Imam Zamana (a.s.). He narrates: Suddenly I saw that the Masjid (Jamkaran) was filled with effulgence and fragrance. When I looked around I found Maula Amirul Momineen (a.s.), Imam Husain (a.s.), His Eminence, Abbas and Imam Zamana (a.s.). I was extremely astonished at the sight. I was unable to understand when suddenly my master glanced at me, which bestowed tranquility to me. Then he said:

“You are cured. Go and tell others to pray for my reappearance as the reappearance is close by, if Allah wills.”

This incident occurred in Mohurru, 1414 A.H. The son of a great scholar saw his father in dream and in dream he had the honor of meeting Imam Zamana (a.s.) along with his father. During the conversation he asked with Imam Zamana (a.s.): O son of Allah's Messenger, has the time of your reappearance arrived, so that the eyes of the seers may be pleased at your elegance and reappearance? He replied:

“Only some definite signs remain from the signs of reappearance and it is possible that they may also be fulfilled in some time, but during these days it is obligatory for you to pray for the reappearance.”¹

¹ *Shaifatgan Hazrat Mahdi (a.t.f.s.):* 1-185:84.

Special favors on the Shia society

The whole universes is receiving sustenance through the blessings of the holy being of His Eminence, the master of the time (a.s.) and because of him the heavens and the earth remain in their places.¹ His Eminence, Amirul Momineen (a.s.) says:

“If the earth is devoid of divine proof even for a moment, its dwellers would be destroyed.”²

Apart from those special favors there is a special blessing of Imam Asr (a.s.) upon the Shia society which he has mentioned in his letter to Shaykh Mufeed (r.a.) and the blessing which fixes a great and greater obligation on all the Shia. He says:

“We are ever mindful of your circumstances, if this had not been there, the calamities would have crashed upon you and the enemies would have torn you into pieces.”³

In the same way it is narrated that His Eminence, also said:

“If we had been reforming your conditions and had not looked upon you with kindness, we would have shunned you due to your negative deeds.”⁴

Does aware of all that grace, favors and greatness and this bestowal of Imam Zamana (a.s.) on the Shia society not create a feeling of shamefulness in anyone? Should we not be prepared to make up for our disloyalties, unkindness and our excesses towards our gentle Imam?

At the end of this discussion it is necessary to remind that if great emphasis is laid on praying for an early reappearance, God forbid, one should not imagine that Imam Asr (a.s.) is needful of the supplications of people.

¹ *Mafatihul Jinaan*, Dua Adilah.

² *Biharul Anwar*, Vol. 51, Pg. 113.

³ *Ihtijaaj*, 2-233.

⁴ *Biharul Anwar*, Vol. 53, Pg. 179.

Because we are aware that Allah, the mighty and high is never needful of His servants; that is why it is mentioned in Quran:

Even if you an all the people on the face of the earth turn infidels (even then) the Almighty Allah is needless of everyone.¹

In the same way, this purified family is also needless of people as Imam Husain (a.s.) said:

“All are needful on Him and he is not in need of anyone.”²

By way of example if His Eminence, Amirul Momineen (a.s.) urges the people to fight jihad against the oath breakers (*Nakiseen*), the unjust (*Qasiteen*) and apostates (*Mariqeen*). Or His Eminence, Abdul Abdullah al-Husain (a.s.) is raising the call of ‘is there any helper who would assist me?’ in the desert of Kerbala. Or Imam Asr (a.s.) calling us to pray for his early reappearance; it definitely does not mean that these noble personages were needful of the help and assistance of people. On the contrary it is their sincerity that they wish to convey people to guidance and salvation. Exactly like how the martyrs of Kerbala helped Imam Husain (a.s.) and achieved such a rank in the court of God that others can only vie for it.

In one of his epistles, Imam Asr (a.s.) says:

I have learnt that there are some people among you who are creating apostasy in religion and are creating doubts and bewilderment in the hearts regarding their Awliya. This has made us distraught. But it is for your sake, and not for my advantage because the Almighty Allah is with us and when He is with us we are not needful of anyone. Because the truth is with us. On the basis of this, if someone deserts us, it does not cause

¹ Surah Ibrahim 14:9.

² *Muntakhabul Athar*: 309.

any worry or distress to us. We are the creations of our Lord, and the creatures after that were created by us.¹

¹ Translation of *Mikyalul Makarim*, quoted from Ihtijaaj 2-278.

What are we supposed to do?

The value of Imam Zamana (a.s.) in our life

At the time when the Masjidun Nabi was constructed when the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) addressed the people, especially in Friday sermons, he used to lean against a trunk of a date tree, which had remain in the courtyard of the Masjid. Thus, when the number of people in the Masjid increased the companions counseled to construct a pulpit for the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) so that everyone may glimpse their beloved leader. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) also accorded his permission. A pulpit having two steps and one platform was constructed.

The very first Friday the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) passed through the crowd and the date trunk and walked towards the new pulpit. He had hardly seated himself on the top when lamentation arose from that dried up trunk on which he used to lean, as if a woman was lamenting for her dead child. So pathetic was the lamentation that cries of sorrow arose from the crowd as well. The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) descended from the pulpit. He embraced the trunk and passed his hand over it; then he said: "Don't be aggrieved." Then he returned to the pulpit and addressing the people, said: O people, this dried trunk is expressing love and devotion to the Prophet and it is aggrieved at the separation, but some people do not at all care whether they are near to me or far. If I had not embraced it and had not passed my hand over it, it would have continued to lament till Judgment Day.¹

It is an occasion of contemplation that when a dried tree is distanced from the Prophet for some moments, it begins lamenting; while it was seeing His Eminence. What has happened to us that we are unable to see our Imam Zamana (a.s.) and we are also away from him, yet we are occupied in our daily

¹ *Biharul Anwar*, Vol. 17, Pg. 326-327.

life? We remember every person and everything, except the Imam of our time. The darner names Sayyid Karim is among those fortunate persons who had the honor of meeting Imam Zamana (a.s.). He used to meet the Imam in his humble dwelling. It is mentioned that one day Imam Asr (a.s.) asked this fortunate man:

“Sayyid Karim, if a week passes in which you are unable to see me, what would you do?”

Sayyid Karim replied: My lord and master, I will die. Imam (a.s.) said:

“If this had not been there, I would not have come to meet you.”

Leave everything aside, if really this is the condition of some (and not all) of his followers and group of persons becomes distraught in separation of His Eminence, would not obtain reappearance?

Our story is a little story of a child who has lost his father. We are like a young child, whose mental maturity has not reached to the level that he can understand in what a great difficulty and deprivation he is; but those who are elder and who can understand the depth and weight of this, they express sincerity for it as Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) has mentioned:

“And orphanhood more serious than losing one’s father is being away from one’s Imam and there being no possibility to reach him.”¹

There is a column in some newspapers for ‘Missing persons’ through which if a person is separated from his parents or relatives due to some accident, he is united with his family members through this. In this column they mention what has passed on him and publish his picture and message. They announce prizes and give contact numbers and request the

¹ *Biharul Anwar*, Vol. 2, Pg. 2.

readers to inform them if they happen to find this person. Which of us is so eager to see Imam Zamana (a.s.)? That we should make some criterion to see him and to search for his presence?

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) says:

“No one can have perfect belief in God except that I am dearer to him than his own self and that my progeny is dearer to his own progeny, my family is dearer to his own family, my life is more precious than his own life.”¹

What do we do if our child is even slightly late in returning from school? We do not continue to sit idle. Fearing that some accident might have taken place, we search for him everywhere.

Who is there from among us who has contemplated on the reappearance of the Imam with seriousness?

How many have become distraught and thoughtful due to occultation?

How many people in the Shia society regard the occultation of the Imam as a calamity and difficulty, and who wish that this malady should be cured? How many people have you seen who left their comforts, even though temporarily, in order to support this feeling? Do you know of anyone, who has given up his sleep and his food at least once?

If we are handed a questionnaire and to note down our difficulties systematically, what would be the percentage of people who would mention their first difficulty to be the occultation of I (a.s.)?

If an angel descends from the sky right now and says: I will fulfill any one of your wishes, which of you would say that his most important desire is reappearance of Imam (a.s.)? During the journey of Ziyarat and times of fulfillment of supplications, when the heart is broken and the tears are flowing how many of

¹ *Biharul Anwar*, Vol. 2, Pg. 76.

us give preference to praying for the reappearance of Imam Zamana (a.s.)?

We have to state with regret that one of our cultural helper who was a teacher of religion and Arabic since a long time, retired from his job sometime ago, he said after reading these lines: So far I did not even know that disloyalty and lack of recognition of we Shia are the causes of occultation of Imam Asr (a.s.).

In fact what is the position of Imam Asr (a.s.) in our life? It is central or peripheral? We have to state with regret that in the life of some of us the touch of Imam Zamana (a.s.) is not present even at the edge.

If someone invites us or you to his home once and makes us sit at his table and feeds us even once, we try our best to be loyal to him for this good turn and to recompense this favor. Then what has happened to us that we have sat and eaten at the table of Imam (a.s.) all our lives along with all the other people of the world, yet we give no thought of recompensing him?

It is an occasion of regret that some Shia youth and more religious awareness of the youth they are having awareness about sportsmen, cinema world or worldly matters and foreign and domestic issues. And basically our individual and social life is without Imam Zamana (a.s.).

The knowledge of majority of the Shia regarding the aspects of the life of Imam Zamana (a.s.) is hazy and scanty. The philosophy of the occultation and reappearance of the Imam is not clear to them fully, although how much knowledge do they have about the life of the other eleven Imams?

If there is no rain for some years and the drought weakens the farmers we go our bare footed into the wilderness and recite Prayers for rain with utmost sincerity and humility, even if there is slightest possibility of rain. Does it not deserve for us that after 1200 years of occultation, which in fact is the real draught

and famine in the world, which has deprived us from the success of the world and the hereafter? During which it is as difficult to guard ones faith as it is difficult to grow a grain of rye on the palm. Should we not move to the desert and wilderness to offer Prayers for an early reappearance? It was the same act performed by Bani Israel and achieved their objective. Their young and old, women and children went into the wilderness and supplicated God to save them from the Egyptians. Almighty God reduced the period of their wait by one hundred and seventy years and Musa (a.s.) was born.

We are always supplicating for our worldly and personal matters even if we have the slightest hope of its acceptance; but we hardly ever pray for an early reappearance although the Holy Imams (a.s.) have informed us that praying for an early reappearance can really advance the reappearance of Imam Zamana (a.s.).

Journeys of Ziyarat and seeking mediation also we are heedless of our Imam. Has it ever happened that we opened *Mafatihul Jinaan* and recited the Ziyarat of Hazrat Sahibul Amr and contemplated on each of its parts? If we travel for the Ziyarat of the holy places, for how many days do we stay in Samarraah?

In order to gain divine proximity and to gain the success of the world and the hereafter and to save oneself from divine chastisement we should refer to the door of Ahle Bayt (a.s.). If we do not we would be oppressing ourselves only and we would purpose cause the destruction of our world and hereafter.

Repentance! Today's need

Humanity should repent most sincerely. Especially the Shia have more responsibility of repenting; because the map of success of humanity is in their hands only. In other words, it can be said that the key to the lock of occultation is with the Shia.

It is mentioned in the traditional report regarding the reappearance of Imam Asr (a.s.) that: When the number of loyalists of the Imam reaches the number of fighters in Badr (313) it would become necessary for the Imam to reappear.¹

Is during the present age from the six million people, there are not even 313 who are having the above-mentioned qualities?

In actual sense this long period of 1167 years which began from occultation and still continues in that at least one part of Shia history should have been such that in it in which some people had tried to find a solution and with right determination keeping the report in mind, created such a standard within himself through which the ground had been prepared for the blessed reappearance of Imam Asr (a.s.) so that the period of occultation had not been so prolonged and the solitude of that Imam would have ended, who is dearer than the life and the conditions of the world, especially the Shia would not have been like we see witness this day. The addressee of this question is also the present generation of the Shia society, while it is preferable that each of us should be attentive to the bitter reality and to contemplate on it. Come, let us ask ourselves: What is our role in the prolongation of the occultation of Imam Zamana (a.s.) or what is our role in advancing the time of reappearance of the Imam?

¹ *Biharul Anwar*, Vol. 100, Pg. 49. In this manner Imam Muhammad Taqi (a.s.) says: When 313 persons are sincerely prepared Almighty Allah will make His Eminence, Mahdi reappear. (*Mikyalul Makarim*, Vol. 1, Pg. 138).

What does our master expects from us?

In what way can we assist our Imam in this world?

It is sufficient for our shamefulness that the Imam of our time always remembers us, whereas we are heedless of his existence. If we are in expectation of this heavenly leader, he is also awaiting for us to awaken from the sleep of heedlessness.

Has such a time not arrived that we can be certain that our savior is living? Is the time not ripe for us to be certain and convey this certainty to others as well that we have no choice, but to take refuge with our beloved?

Indeed all of should believe that we are face to face with him and our kind leader is nearer to us than we are to ourselves.

Believe me that Imam Asr (a.s.) knows us better than we know ourselves as he witnesses all whatever we do. Every word that emits our tongue, before it can reach our ears it is heard by His Eminence. Did his forefathers not say:

“Even if you move your lips inside your houses, we understand what you mean to say.”¹

We believe that every week the scroll of our deed is presented before Imam (a.s.) and the Imam goes through it; but what a pity that this certainty does not stop us from committing sins. I adjure you by Allah if a young child is seeing our deeds, are we still careless of our character and behavior? Do we not try to change ourselves? What audacity it is! That we are committing sins in the very presence of the divine representative? We do not look at him most of the time and if we look at him we do not recognize him. But he sees us and recognizes us as well. And he is also aware of our deeds and circumstances. If we really believe in the presence of the Imam in the world and in every matter regard ourselves to be present

¹ This report and this allusion are mentioned by the author of *Mikyalul Makarim* many times in his book.

before him and we know that he is aware of our deeds, would we still continue to commit sins?

Believe me! All the bounties, excellence and perfections that is present in this world, is due to the auspiciousness of Imam Zamana (a.s.) and everything in the universe is due to his blessing.

Indeed, the Shaitan is waiting to misguide the Shia of the last age so that he may get them expelled from Paradise like Adam and Hawwa. We should be careful not to be caught in the snare of Shaitan and thrown out of the Paradise of Imamate.¹ A believer is never stung from the same hole.

¹ When someone expressed the desire for Paradise in the presence of Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.), he said: You are presently in Paradise. Pray to God that He may not expel you from Paradise. People said: May our lives be sacrificed on you, we are in the world (we have not even entered Paradise). Imam (a.s.) asked: Are you not cognizant of Imamate? They replied: Why not? He said: Paradise is this Imamate; whoever testifies to it is in Paradise. Prayer to God that it is not taken away from you. (*Biharul Anwar*, Vol. 68, Pg. 102).

Come, let us not abandon our Imam

In the Kerbala of occultation, the call of ‘is there any helper?’ should not remain unanswered, lest the clamor of Kufa prevents us from hearing the call of abandonment of Hujjat Ibnul Hasan (a.s.). It should not be that we leave His Eminence, the Remnant of Allah alone. By God! The sorrow of the history of the world is sufficient for him. The split head of Ali (a.s.); the broken back of Lady Fatima Zahra (s.a.); the pieces of the liver of Imam Hasan (a.s.); the severed head of the martyr of Kerbala being held aloft on the spear; the wound of the captivity of lady Zainab (s.a.); which can be remedied only by the reappearance of the Imam. All this is sufficient to fill up his heart with pain and sorrow.

Fortunate are those, who are still in the blessed presence of this sun; there is no obstacle between us interdicted and this divine proof, except our selfishness. These are clouds of heedlessness and disobedience that have concealed his face from our eyes.

We only discuss about occultation and wait for reappearance whereas they are they have flown from the dust and contacting the clouds of the heights and moving and along with this they are soaring; they are the same who get to see the sun.

The conscience of the universe is testifying to the proximity of reappearance. Allah, Allah!...Laa Yasbaqannakum...! It should not be that someone should take precedence over us. It should not be that the justice seeking and pure nature people of the world precede us in welcoming this comer and pledging allegiance to Imam Asr (a.s.) (*Fastabaqul Khairaat*).

Those of the prophets who expressed love for Imam Muhammad Mahdi (a.s.) at the earliest were awarded with the title of Ulil Azm.

When the seventy-two martyrs of Kerbala harkened to the call of 'Is there anyone who would help us' and they remained steadfast on that; then see how much envy they have left on the hearts of the people of the world.

Some time still remains to make haste to assist Imam Asr (a.s.) and to enlist among his helpers. Companions and helpers of the Imam are being selected.

It is narrated from Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) that before the creation of this world during the spiritual sphere when the Almighty Allah took the covenant from the prophets of His kingdom for the prophethood of the Seal of the prophets, Wilayat of Amirul Momineen (a.s.) and his successors, he addressed them as follows: Mahdi is the one through whom I would help My religion, make My kingdom apparent, take revenge from My enemies and everyone would willingly or unwillingly submit before Me. The Ulil Azm prophets expressed their faith in Imam Muhammad Mahdi (a.s.) immediately, but Adam neither denied nor accepted (because he was in rapture seeing the greatness of the savior and hence he was late in expressing his acceptance); that is why he remained deprived from becoming Ulil Azm. *Kafi*, Vol. 2, Pg. 8, Kitabul Eimaan wal Kufr, Chapter 3, Tr. 1; for more details refer to *Ilalush Sharai* 122, Chapter 101, Vol. 1-2; *Tafsir Kanzul Daqaiq*, 6-326.

Come, let us once again recognize the Imam of our time

According to Shia beliefs, true success and real religiosity can only be achieved only through the way of the path of Ahle Bayt of the Prophet and by acting upon their commands; so much so that if someone performs deeds equal to even seventy prophets, but he has no affection for Amirul Momineen (a.s.) and his descendants, none of his acts would be accepted; in the same way in every period of time the recognition of the Imam saves one from a death of Ignorance as mentioned in a large number of Shia and Ahle Sunnat traditions.

“One who dies without recognizing the Imam of his time, dies the death of Ignorance.”

A notable point in this tradition is that if someone during this time is having faith in the rest of the eleven Imams and is deficient in cognition and devotion to the twelfth, then also at the time of his death, he would die like a person dying during the period of Jahiliyya.

Since Imamate is a root of religion and emulation (*Taqleed*) is not allowed in it that is why it is obligatory on every duty-bound person that he should try so that he may be saved from a death of Ignorance and from the first night of the grave till Judgment Day he may be answerable for his beliefs and the blessing of Imamate.

Recognition of Imam Asr (a.s.) is not only knowing his name, lineage, date of birth and location. Although in this matter also, the intellects and bewildered and the thinkers are amazed. On the contrary, each of us is duty bound to take initiative according to his capability, love, obedience and cognition.

You should definitely contemplate upon this for some time.

Thousands of intellectuals like Shaykh Tusi and Shaykh Ansari cannot pay the cost of a single breath of Imam Zamana (a.s.).¹

The qualities and perfection of the personality of Imam Asr (a.s.) and his status is not clear to the people in the right way. That is why it is regrettable that in the minds of most of the people the true value and position of the Imam is not clear. Imam Ali Reza (a.s.) says:

The Imam is the unique one of his time. No one is close them in his status. No scholar can become his equal. There is no one in the world like him. There is no likeness to him.

Numerous traditional reports of the infallibles emphasize that Ahle Bayt (a.s.) cannot be compared to anyone and basically this heavenly family it is unlawful to compare other with them.²

Just suppose if someone compares the greatness of Imam Asr (a.s.) to others and likens it to the stars and equals others to be like minute particles of sand or he shows Imam (a.s.) to be an ocean and compares others to be like drops.

Or calls him a sun and regards others as candle, such a person in any case is making a mistake, because the infallible Imam cannot be compared to anything in any way.

During the lifetime of the late Agha Haaj Husain Tabatabai Burujardi, the Supreme Maraja of the Shia world someone mentioned his name along with that of Imam Asr (a.s.) during supplications which made this gentleman extremely displeased and screamed in protest: Tell him to shut up. What is my worth that I should be mentioned along with that of Imam Zamana (a.s.)? There is regrettable aspect in our society that some persons and different groups through some philosophical

¹ Lecture of Ayatullah Waheed Khorasani to the students of Markaz Mahdaviyat, Year 1381 A.H.

² *Biharul Anwar*: 22:406 & 23:117.

discussions, social, political schools, mystical topics, Gnostic antics, printing of colorful and gaudy books, claim that these are means for reaching God and in this way they make a mistake whereas according to the teachings of heavenly religion and Shia society during every period the gate to Allah is only the Imam of that time and every other path fails to convey one to God and His pleasure, because in the intention of Allah, the mighty and high the means of reaching upto His court is Ahle Bayt (a.s.). And everyone who following his selfish desires treads his self-made path and becomes aloof from the family of revelation, distances from the Imam of the time, and then want to reach God, he actually attempting an impossible thing. Such a person is not only worthless before Allah, he is also deserving of divine fury. Someone asked Abu Abdullah al-Husain (a.s.): What is the cognition of God? He replied:

That the people of every period should recognize the Imam of their time as his obedience is obligatory on everyone.¹

There was a family in Bani Israel that if one of its members prayed to God for forty nights his supplications was definitely accepted. But once when one of them prayed his supplications was not granted even after forty nights. That person came to Prophet Isa (a.s.) and asked the reason for this. Isa (a.s.) sought mediation of divine court and it was revealed: O Isa, My servant was trying to approach Me through a way other than the path which leads to Me. He was calling while he harbored doubt in your prophethood. If he had called me till his neck would have fractured and his fingers had become lifeless, I would not have responded to him.²

On the basis of this, in Ziyarat Aale Yasin, after swearing by the Wilayat and Imamate of eleven Imams, separately in a special manner, we declare the testimony of the Wilayat and

¹ *Biharul Anwar*, Vol. 22, Pg. 83.

² *Kafi*, Vol. 2, Pg. 400 (Kitabul Eimaan wal Kufr, Chapter of Doubt, Tr. 9).

Imamate of Imam Asr (a.s.), because in fact due the present time, the straight path, the path of salvation, the ark of salvation, the trustee of God, the great divine sign, the representative of God on the earth, the legatee of Allah, the true guardian, the beloved one of God, the absolute truth, treasure of divine knowledge, heir of the knowledge and perfections of the prophets, the path of God, the hand of God, the eye of God, the proof of God, the effulgence of God, the face of God, the promise of God, the head of God, the protector of divine secrets, refuge of the nation, the means of divine favors, the standard of guidance, the word of God, the strong rope of Allah, the guardian of believers, the one having final discretion, the giver of all favors, the security of the time is holy being of His Eminence, Baqiyatullah al-Aazam as we read in Ziyarat Aale Yasin:

“Peace be on you, O the path to Allah; such whoever trod any other path, was destroyed.”¹

In the same way it is mentioned in the Ziyarat of the Imam:

“I bear witness that through loyalty to you, deeds are approved, acts are purified, rewards are doubled, and punishments for wrongdoings are erased. Therefore, one who bears loyalty to you and recognizes your Imamate, will have his deeds approved, his saying credited, his rewards doubled, and his wrong-doings erased; while if he rejects loyalty to you, ignores the recognition of you, and follows anyone else, Allah shall throw him headlong into hellfire. Shall never approve any of his deeds, and shall never set up a balance for him on Judgment Day.”²

We should sincerely supplicate for the cognition and awareness of God, His Prophet and His Proof, and immerse

¹ *Mafatihul Jinaan*, Ziyarat Hazrat Sahibul Amr at the time of seeking permission to enter the Sardab, *Biharul Anwar*, Vol. 102, Pg. 117.

² *Mafatihul Jinaan*, Ziyarat Hazrat Sahibul Amr at the time of seeking permission to enter the Sardab, *Biharul Anwar*, Vol. 102, Pg. 117.

ourselves completely in the effulgence of recognition. If we recognized this being in the real sense and fulfilled our duties fully it would be the time for the divine effulgence to appear and the love for the son, father and mother will be seen disappearing.

If so far we have not offered such love for His Eminence (a.s.) it is due to the deficiency of our recognition; we have been shortcoming in our duties, because we do not recognize him at all. We do not endeavor for any connection between the creator and the creation, because we have no recognition; we are attentive to apparent aspects in our matters but we forget this blessed being, who is the means of connection between the earth and the heavens; that is why the following supplication is emphasized during the period of occultation.

O Allah, make me recognize Your self...

I say to myself that...I should begin my A, B of Imamate.

Supplication for hastening of reappearance

It is very important to end heedlessness in the Shia society and among the followers of His Eminence (a.s.), because the occultation of Imam Zamana (a.s.) is becoming an ordinary issue, on the basis of which, we are becoming heedless of our living, present and seeing Imam. It is necessary to warn the people and find some cure for ending this habit.

If we imagine the period of occultation to be an imprisonment for Imam Zamana (a.s.), we regard it to be a self-made deprivation for Shia society from a great divine bounty and we should not consider a life without the Imam to be life at all. In this condition, we should sincerely pray for the reappearance of His Eminence, because the real hurdle in the reappearance of the Imam is the lack of preparation of the people themselves. And perhaps this is the meaning of the world being full of injustice and oppression that people would get confused of the excess of injustice and focus their attention on the trampling of their rights and they would think that its reformation is also beyond human capacity which would imply that man should come under the refuge of grace and justice of Imam Zamana (a.s.). Although this awareness and request should reach the court of the Almighty Allah in form of supplication and should be accepted.

Call the most powerful one, who does what He likes. Express helplessness and lowliness before the Almighty Allah and request for ease and acceptance. Now whenever reappearance and hastening of victory is mentioned the discussion of supplication becomes obligatory. Because in fact there is special importance of supplication in the hastening of reappearance and it has complete and definite effect, because if this had not been there, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and the Holy Imams (a.s.) according to many traditional reports would not

have ordered it to us that is why it is obligatory on us that we should continue to pray for reappearance and should not despair of encompassing divine mercy even for a moment. And in the same way that like being involved in individual and family problems prayed excessively and present our requests to the divine court in a helpless manner and do not tire of seeking the mediation of the Holy infallibles (a.s.), in exactly the same way for this matter of life also which in fact is the solution of the ideal and material difficulties for us and for our whole universe. We should not lose courage and if so far we have been shortcoming, we still have time to make amends for it.

Dast az Talab nadaram ta kaam man bar aayed.

Yaa tan rasad be jaanaan ya jaan za tan bar aayed.

Sayyid Ibne Tawus, who is included among great Shia scholars and who had the honor to be in the presence of Imam Zamana (a.s.) and was bestowed with the epithet of ‘son’ and who was aware of the great name of God and divine secrets, has addressed his son as follows:

“Know that your most important need should be in whose refuge you obtain guidance and support; you should desire for one, who is the Imam of your time that is why you should in Prayers, fasting and supplications, us should pray for him before anything else, and pray for yourself after that. What I am telling you that you should prefer the needs of Imam Zamana (a.s.) over your needs. It is because the existence of the world and the creatures is only due to his existence. Act upon whatever I have said as it is the clearest fact and if anyone has been deficient regarding his master and acted with careless he is still in error.

Have we ever thought how our Holy Imams (a.s.) have accorded such importance to this topic? Have we paid attention to this important matter so far? I again repeat that whatever I have mentioned, after paying attention to that no excuse will

remain for you that you should not accord importance to pray for hastening of the reappearance.¹

The conclusion is: A definite effect is found in the ease in reappearance of His Eminence, Wali-e-Asr and the condition of love, recognition and honesty is that every Shia should pray for the hastening of his or her Imam.

¹ *Falahus Saail*: 44.

Amazing effects of Dua

A very fine book which explains the effects and blessings of supplications and explains the responsibilities of Shia regarding hastening of reappearance of Imam Asr (a.s.); it also mentions supplications which are supposed to be recited during the period of occultation, is *Mikyalul Makarim fee Fawaidud dua Lil Qaim*. This book is written on the subject of Imam Zamana (a.s.) and its name was also selected by His Eminence and its perusal is very beneficial and hope-giving for the fans of Imam Muhammad Mahdi (a.s.).

In the first volume of this book, the respected author has mentioned 102 benefits of praying for hastening of reappearance of Imam Zamana (a.s.) through verses of Quran and traditional reports. Below we state some of those benefits.

- In view of God, it is the best act and it pleasing to the Almighty Allah and the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.).
- It causes the forgiveness of sins and changes evils into good.
- It causes respect and obedience of Almighty God and the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.).
- It makes one eligible for intercession of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and Imam Zamana (a.s.).
- It is the means of fulfilling the covenant and repaying the cost of prophethood.
- It is cause of fulfillment of supplication, means of descent of blessings and increase in sustenance.
- One is inclined to see him in wakefulness or sleep.
- One gets the chance to come back into the world during the period of reappearance.

- It causes increase in Wilayat of Imam Zamana (a.s.).
- It is the means of salvation from the chastisement of the hereafter.
- One becomes eligible for divine help.
- It increases the lifespan.
- It takes one to the reward of gaining knowledge.
- One who prays for reappearance will be raised up with Amirul Momineen (a.s.).
- The supplicant becomes eligible for the prayers of Imam Zamana (a.s.).
- It makes the supplicant most proximate to the Almighty Allah and the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.).
- The supplication gets admitted to Paradise with the guarantee of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and His Eminence.
- One gets the reward of helping the oppressed (because the Imam is the most oppressed person of the world).
- One gets the reward for revenging the blood of Imam Husain (a.s.).
- The supplicant will be able to intercede for seventy thousand sinners.
- On Judgment Day the supplication of Amirul Momineen (a.s.) would be with him.
- The supplication will enable the supplicant to enter Paradise without accounting.
- It is a means to scratch the face of Satan.

- It is a means of security from thirst on Judgment Day.
- Angels are present in gathering of supplication for early reappearance.
- One gets the reward of martyrdom in the company of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and being under the standard of Imam Muhammad Mahdi (a.s.).
- In the hereafter the supplicant will get a rank higher than that of the martyrs.
- The supplications of Lady Fatima Zahra (s.a.) will be in favor of the supplicant.
- All the sorrows of the world and the hereafter would be dispelled of the supplicant.
- The angels would pray in favor of the supplicant.

Now that we have come to know this supplications for reappearance are having definite effect, this creates an amazing warning that if during the period of occultation believers will pray for their salvation and reappearance of their leader, the Almighty Allah will create for them ways through which they would be able to recognize their Imam and become attentive to him and will make more efforts in this regard.

Praying for the reappearance of the Awaited Imam is the most effective and important act, upon which every Shia must persevere and must not forget it in any instance and must not leave any stone unturned in this regard. Indeed, believers in the Imamate of the proof of God and from their social, individual and political power and ideal and academic aspects have responsibility towards their Imam.

Among the most important issues of the present age is the matter of financial assistance of Imam Zamana (a.s.).

It is a pity that in Shia society there is no awareness about Imam Asr (a.s.) worth the name. People should read and know about Imam Zamana (a.s.) and they should gain recognition about this promised one of the universe. Apparently no such means is visible, but in the corners of the world there are individuals and organizations that are sincerely endeavoring to make people aware of the living divine proof, but so far what is being done is very less compared to what should be done.

More pitiable is the fact that we witness today that many enemies of Ahle Bayt (a.s.) are spending billions of dollars in order to spread deviated beliefs through misguided sects in all the corners of the world including in Islamic countries. But we, who are the followers of Ahle Bayt (a.s.), are unaware of our responsibility.

Allah, the mighty and high says in the Holy Quran:

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يُقْرِضُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا فَيُضَاعِفَهُ لَهُ أَضْعَافًا
كَثِيرَةً

“Who is it that will offer of Allah a goodly gift, so He will multiply it to him manifold, and Allah straitens and amplifies...” (Surah Baqarah 2:245)

Each of us must have this holy verse inscribed on the foreheads of charitable organizations. Why is it written? It is only so that it may become the focus of attention of the people near about and that people should participate in charitable deeds. So that people are encouraged, whereas we are heedless of the fact that the announcement of the Almighty Allah in the path of recognition is regarding the movement of mankind and it is for the Wilayat and devotion to the caliph of God, because when Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) was asked about his verse, he said:

“(This verse) is revealed about being attached to the Imam.”¹

In this way, he says in another tradition:

“The Almighty Allah does not seek loan from what is with people because of need; on the contrary every right that belongs to God is in fact His legatee.”²

He also mentioned to one of his companions:

“O Mayyah, one dirham, which makes you close to the Imam, is heavier than Mt. Uhad.”³

When Ayatullah Musawi Isfahani, author of *Mikyalul Makarim Fee Fawaidud Dua Lil Qaim*, hints at the responsibilities during occultation, he mentions doing a good turn (*Sile Rahem*) towards the Imam arguing through numerous traditions and then says:

It is the duty of a believer that he must set apart a share of his wealth and property in the service of Imam (a.s.). He should continue this every year. This is obligatory for all whether, rich or poor, whether lowly or exalted, woman or man. There is no difference with regard to social status. However, each has to contribute depending upon his capability. As Allah says:

اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا لَا يُكَلِّفُ

Allah does not impose upon any soul a duty but to the extent of its ability.⁴

And He says:

إِلَّا مَا آتَاهَا لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا

Allah does not lay on any soul a burden except to the extent

¹ *Usul Kafi*, 1-537, Kitabul Hujjah, Baab Sile Imam 129, Tr. 2 & 4.

² *Usul Kafi*, 1-537, Tr. 3.

³ *Usul Kafi*, 1-537, Tr. 6.

⁴ Surah Baqarah 2:286

to which He has granted it.¹

Traditions have mentioned the dedication of a part of our wealth to Imam Zamana (a.s.) but there is no fixed amount for it because apparently it is a highly recommended act and the Holy Imams (a.s.) have likened it to a compulsory duty. As mentioned in *Al-Kafi*, Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said, “There is no better deed than earmarking a few Dirhams for Imam (a.s.). The Almighty Allah makes this Dirham equal to Mt. Uhad in Paradise for this donor.” After this Imam (a.s.) said, “The Almighty Allah says in His book:

كَثِيرَةٌ مِّنْ ذَا الَّذِي يُقْرِضُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا فَيُضَاعِفَهُ لَهُ أَضْعَافًا

Who is it that will offer of Allah a goodly gift, so He will multiply it to him manifold.

Imam says, “By Allah this is a special gift to Imam (a.s.).”³ It is narrated from His Eminence (a.s.) in another tradition that he said: Indeed, the Almighty Allah has not asked for loan that which the people have under their control, from the aspect of need and every right that the Almighty Allah has is also for His Wali.⁴ In the same book, in a correct report it is narrated from Ishaq bin Ammar that he asked His Eminence, Abu Ibrahim Imam Musa bin Ja’far (a.s.) regarding the following verse:

الَّذِي يُقْرِضُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا فَيُضَاعِفَهُ لَهُ وَلَهُ أَجْرٌ كَرِيمٌ مِّنْ ذَا

Who is there that will offer to Allah a good loan so He will double it for him, and he shall have an excellent reward.⁵

The Imam said: It is revealed about doing favor to the Imam.⁶ And through the author’s own chain of narrators it is narrated from Hasan bin Miyah from his father that he said: His Eminence, Abu Abdullah Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said to me: O Miyah, one dirham spent in doing favor to the Imam is heavier than Mt. Uhad.⁷ In the same

¹ Surah Talaq 66:7

² Surah Baqarah 2:245

³ *Usool Kafi*, Vol. 1, Pg. 537

⁴ *Usool Kafi*, Vol. 1, Pg. 537

⁵ Surah Hadid 57:11

⁶ *Usool Kafi*, Vol. 1, Pg. 538

⁷ *Usool Kafi*, Vol. 1, Pg. 538

book, it is narrated from His Eminence, Abu Abdullah Imam Sadiq (a.s.) that he said: One dirham spent in doing favor to the Imam is better than two million dirhams spent in other charitable deeds.¹ And in a correct tradition from His Eminence, Abu Abdullah Imam Sadiq (a.s.) it is mentioned with regard to the following verse:

وَالَّذِينَ يَصِلُونَ مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَنْ يُوصَلَ

*And those who join that which Allah has bidden to be joined.*²

The Imam said: It was revealed with regard to the relationship of Aale Muhammad (a.s.) and it is also about your relatives. Then he said: Do not be of those who take only one meaning.³

In a reliable traditional report it is narrated from His Eminence (a.s.) that he said: I take one dirham from one of you while I am one of the richest man of Medina, the sole aim of this is that you may be purified. In the same book it is narrated from His Eminence, Abu Abdullah Imam Sadiq (a.s.) that he said: One who thinks that the Imam is in need of what he takes from the people, is an infidel, it is not except that the people are needful that the Imam accepts from them. Allah, the Mighty and Sublime says:

خُذْ مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ صَدَقَةً تُطَهِّرُهُمْ وَتُزَكِّيهِمْ بِهَا

*Take alms out of their property, you would cleanse them and purify them thereby.*⁴

There is a remarkable tradition from Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) in *Furu Kafi*:

“One dirham spent in Hajj expenses is better than a million dirhams spent in some other good way; one dirham that reaches the Imam is equal to spending a million dirhams in Hajj expenses.”⁵

¹ *Usool Kafi*, Vol. 2, Pg. 156

² Surah Raad 13:21

³ *Usool Kafi*, Vol. 1, Pg. 537

⁴ Translation of *Mikyalul Makarim*, Vol. 2, Pg. 351-353.

⁵ Translation of *Mikyalul Makarim*, Vol. 2, Pg. 353.

Pondering on this statement of Imam (a.s.) a little bit makes one realize that today supposing if someone spends one rupee in Hajj, it is as if he has spent a million rupees in other charitable ways. In exactly the same way, if someone spends one rupee in the path of Imam Asr (a.s.) it is equal to spending a million rupees in an accepted Hajj. According to a simple calculation, one rupee spent in the way of Imam Zamana (a.s.) is equal to a thousand million spent in some other charitable ways. And it is not amazing also, as it is the basis of Shia beliefs.

We believe that Allah, the mighty and high created the whole universe, including the stars and planets and all the creatures, men, jinns and angels etc only for the sake of Ahle Bayt (a.s.) and man is created only that he may recognize the path of divine obedience through cognition of Imam and obedience and he should adopt this path; that is why there is so much value of the recognition of the Imam. Therefore it is necessary for the believers to act on this matter seriously.

It is a matter of pity that this practice has not spread among us Shia fully and not everyone acts upon it; therefore it is deserving that the followers of His Eminence, Baqiyatullah to revive this practice, which is a necessary and effective way of assisting Imam Asr (a.s.), therefore we should act upon this in a serious manner.

We have often seen that when a dear one of a family passes away thousands are spent in his numerous rites and it is spent in various things like flowers, food for guests and other things, whereas this expense is on the occasion that people gather to offer condolence to the relatives of the deceased only on the promise of a dinner. Would it not be better if this amount is spent on propagation of culture and teachings of Ahle Bayt (a.s.)? Would the souls of our deceased not be more satisfied by this?

This example is general in every sphere, even in the rituals and celebrations of 15th Shaban, in which much is spent on

lighting and serving sweets etc; more important than this is serving food for the intellects and increase the level of our recognition and make people aware of the cognition of Imam Asr (a.s.) and explain about his occultation and victimization of the Imam and act upon this with seriousness and popularize this; on the contrary we should give maximum preference to this matter, because making the Shia aware of recognition of His Eminence is more important than feeding them with sweets, which sweeten their mouth only for some moments and remain in their system only for some time.

The best act in this regard is writing, compilation, printing and publication of books on the subject of Imam Zamana (a.s.), which creates awareness in people.

Although those who are not capable of writing or publishing books they can at least contribute monetarily so that these valuable books may be circulated widely in order to create eagerness among more people to read and thus the seed of love for Ahle Bayt (a.s.) is planted in their hearts and so that they may accommodate this promised one in their affections and may get the benefit of this great service, regarding which traditional reports have hinted; apart from that it invites the bestowals and attention of Imam Asr (a.s.).

If someone says I am not a good orator that people should pay attention to me and neither am I capable of writing books; and I am not even able to contribute financially; at least one can keep himself engrossed in the remembrance of Imam Zamana (a.s.) and every moment we should pray for his early reappearance and also encourage others for the same.

We should remember that it does not mean that we should keep away from social and individual activities; on the contrary along with the fulfillment of these duties in the actual act we should have contact with the Imam of our time and pray for his reappearance, which is the most important social and individual responsibility.

To pray for the early reappearance of Hazrat Baqiyatullah is the best way or remembering this heavenly treasure in solitude and company as Imam Musa Kazim (a.s.) says:

“His being would be concealed from the view, but the hearts of the believers would not be heedless of his remembrance.”¹

This remembrance would make us secure from the deviation and destruction of the last age.

Come, let us under the light of verses of Quran and traditional reports, especially the messages of Imam Asr (a.s.), become the implication of the statements of the heavenly book.

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَعْظُمُ بَوَاحِدَةٍ ۖ أَنْ تَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ مَشْنَىٰ وَفُرَادَىٰ

“Say: I exhort you only to one thing, that rise up for Allah’s sake in twos and singly.” (Surah Saba 34:46)

At the same time, in our solitudes, we should pray to God for the reappearance of the Imam. And together at holy places, at the sanctuaries of infallibles and in other places as well, like Masjids, Imam Bargah and in religious gatherings, along with sincere repentance, pray for the reappearance of the avenger of Aale Muhammad (a.s.) and beseech the Almighty God to send him soon.

¹ Kamaluddin, Vol. 2, Pg. 369-378, Chapter 34, Tr. 6.

Individual and congregational supplication

We should always keep in mind supplication for early reappearance and especially in gatherings of believers, particularly in programs which are related to Ahle Bayt (a.s.). Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) says:

“When forty persons gather for supplicating and they call God for the solving of their problems, the Almighty Allah grants their supplications. And if instead of forty there are only four persons and they gather and supplicate Allah, the Mighty and Sublime ten times, the Almighty Allah accepts their supplication. And if not even four persons are present and only a solitary individual supplicates forty times, the Almighty Allah will grant his wish.”¹

Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) also said:

“Whenever something troubled my respected father, he used to gather ladies and children and supplicate; and they used to recite: Amen.”²

Devotees and followers of Ahle Bayt (a.s.), mourners of the chief of the martyrs and those who participate in gatherings of mourning and religious organizations, should know that expression of loyalty to the Holy Imams (a.s.), whether during mourning or celebration, it is a moment of obtaining the pleasure of Imam Zamana (a.s.) and in all those conditions, especially when tears are flowing from the eyes, the heart is aggrieved and then he prays for the early reappearance of the son of His Eminence, Aba Abdullah al-Husain (a.s.) and avenger of the pure blood, just as we read in Ziyarat Ashura: I beg Allah, who

¹ *Kafi*, Vol. 2, Pg. 487, Kitabud Dua, Chapter of Congregation in Supplications, 17, Trs. 1 & 3.

² *Kafi*, Vol. 2, Pg. 487, Kitabud Dua, Chapter of Congregation in Supplications, 17, Trs. 1 & 3.

honored you above others, to be generous towards me on account of you, and give me the opportunity to be with the victorious Imam, the descendent of Mohammad (blessings and peace be on him and on his children from Allah) at the time of the final and decisive war against Allah's enemies.

It is also mentioned in the book of *Mikyalul Makarim* that His Eminence, Baqiyatullah (a.s.) says:

“If a believer, in a gathering of mourning, after the narration of the calamities of Imam Husain (a.s.) prays for me, I also pray for him.”¹

It is also narrated from Allamah Amini (r.a.) that he said:

“One who, after the Salawat, says ‘and hasten their victory (wa ajjil farajahum)’ I will make him share in the reward of writing the book of Ghadeer.”

Speakers, orators and poets of Ahle Bayt (a.s.), in their speeches, couplets, poems and elegies, should make Imam Asr (a.s.) as the point of focus and in the moments of acceptance of supplications they should not become heedless for praying for the reappearance of Imam Asr (a.s.).

It is narrated from Shaykh Hasan Samarrai, who was a very devout orator of Iraq that he said: During the time, I was in Samarra, one Friday, at the time of Noon Prayer, I went to the Holy Cellar (*Sardab*) in the afternoon and saw that there was no one present there, other than me, so I focused my attention to the place of Imam Zamana (a.s.). At the moment I heard a voice behind me, speaking in Persian.

“Tell my Shia and followers to adjure God in the name of my aunt, Lady Zainab (s.a.) and pray for my early reappearance.”²

¹ *Mikyalul Makarim*, Vol. 1, Pg. 333.

² *Shaifatgaan Hazrat Mahdi (a.s.)*, 1-251.

Deception of Satan

Some people imagine that before praying for reappearance it is necessary that we purify the self and eligibility for supplication should be created. It is a great mistake and it is possible that it is instigation of Satan, so that by involving in obtaining of eligibility, he might seize the moments of opportunity and the eligibility is also not gained. In addition to that we should remember that supplication is an important part of eligibility and purification of self. Are Ahle Bayt (a.s.) not implications of the verse of purification? There is no way of getting attached to this pure family except through purification of self.

When the Satan was expelled from the court of God he beseeched Allah to grant him respite till the end of the world as a recompense for thousands of years of his worship. Satan requested God: O Lord, give me respite till the day the creatures are raised. The Almighty Allah said: You are given respite till the known hour.¹

Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) says regarding the death of Satan at the time of reappearance:

“In the holy verse the ‘known hour’ implies the advent of the Qaim of Aale Muhammad (a.s.), when he would stage an uprising, Iblees would come upto Masjid Kufa dragging on his knees and he would be saying: Woe upon this time. He would be caught by his forelocks and beheaded. That is the known hour, when his tenure would end.”

Imam Ali Reza (a.s.) also says in the exegesis of this verse:

“When everyone would know the time of the death of Satan is the time of the reappearance of the Qaim.”²

¹ Surah Hijr 15: 32-39.

² *Kamaluddin*, 2:371, Chap. 35, Tr. 5.

It is because of this that the Satan in all his attacks and excuses and through his helpers tries to turn away the attention of people from Imam Zamana (a.s.) and all his efforts are focused on delaying the time of reappearance.

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A beneficial reminder

A weakness found in speakers, writers, researchers and progressive minded people is that we pay more attention to the marginal issues and are heedless of the core of reappearance. We focus all our practical capacity to secondary and less important issues, but remain heedless of awaiting and praying for the reappearance. It is correct that some issues like discussing and listening to, reading and writing about signs of last period of time is attractive and sweet, but it is our responsibility to identify His Eminence, and to pray for him and the important recognizing the signs of reappearance is indeed lesser.

Imam Hasan (a.s.) told the late Ayatullah Mirza Muhammad Baqir Faqih Eimani in sleep or in revelation: Explain to the people from the pulpits and order them that they should repent and pray for the hastening of the repentance of Hazrat Hujjat. To pray for the advent of His Eminence is not like the Funeral Prayer, which is *Wajib Kifai*; that if some people perform it, others are exempted from it. It is like Five time obligatory Prayer, which is equally obligatory on every male and female of age. It is obligatory to pray for the reappearance of Imam Zamana (a.s.).

If we have so far not acted on our obligation; and have been heedless in praying for the avenger for Aale Muhammad (a.s.), come let us make a vow to the Almighty Allah and beseech sincerely to the court of Almighty. O Lord, if since the beginning of my life till date, there is no act of mine, which has earned Your pleasure, accepted Hajj, Ziyarat of the Holy Imams (a.s.) and descendants of Imams, recitation of Quran, congregational Prayer, alms (*Sadaqah*), favor, a good turn to relatives, devotions, mourning for Imam Husain (a.s.), supplications and other recommended acts; then this very moment take away all my acts and hasten the reappearance of the savior of the world and from today make each of my acts which earn Your pleasure to be a cause of early reappearance. O

Lord, do not make me heedless from the remembrance of my master even for a moment.

Kaari kuneem warna khajalat bar aaward.

Rozike rakhte jaan be jahaan deegar kusheem.

On this juncture it is better that Haaj Shaykh Ahmad Kafi Khorasani (r.a.), the ardent fan of Imam Zamana (a.s.) makes the following statement about the loneliness of Imam Muhammad Mahdi (a.s.):

O Shias, by God, our master is coming. By God, our supporter is arriving. Master, everyone is targeting us, and this is the fate of one who has no guardian. May I be sacrificed on you, O Hujjat Ibnul Hasan, the Shia are almost decimated. O son of Fatima, your followers are exhausted! O Mahdi of Quran! Your supporters are losing heart. Please beseech God for your reappearance. Your separation was enough for me that my enemies are chastising me; that if your master had existed he would have arrived.

O my master, our children have grown up, the youth have reached old age and a group of elderly persons has also died, but they could not glimpse you. By God, O people, your supplications have effect, your wails are effective. The Imam himself said to the late Majlisi (r.a.): Majlisi, tell the Shias to pray for me. Now I wish to supplicate. O God, I adjure You by the broken back of Lady Fatima Zahra (s.a.), I adjure You by the tearful face of Lady Fatima Zahra (s.a.), O God, I adjure you by the severed head of Imam Husain (a.s.), that You hasten the reappearance of Imam (a.s.).

Different supplications and Ziyarats

We should not think that in supplicating for reappearance we it is sufficient only to recite Dua Faraj and ending of Salawat (*wa ajjil farajahum*); on the contrary there are other supplications, Ziyarats, ritual Prayers and recitations etc. through which it is possible to create an ideal connection with the pivot of the universe. One of them being Salawat of Abul Hasan Zarrab Isfahani, regarding which Sayyid Ibne Tawus says:

If someone is unable to perform the rituals of Friday, which are especially regarding Hazrat Sahibul Amr (a.s.), he should in no case forget the recitation of this Salawat as a secret is concealed in it, which the Almighty Allah has informed us of.¹

Seeking mediation in the court of Imam Asr (a.s.)

It is noticed with great regret that some followers of Ahle Bayt (a.s.), in their supplications and vows etc., rarely direct their attention to Imam Zamana (a.s.) and hardly pose their requests to him. Although all the members of Ahle Bayt (a.s.) are from the same effulgence, but since this is the period of the Imamate of Imam Muhammad Mahdi (a.s.) and the Masoomeen (a.s.) have also instructed us to pose our requests to our living and present Imam, and continue to seek help from his court as he is the Imam of the time and this age belongs to him only.

No function of Imam (a.s.) is suspended because of occultation as this is not restricted to the time of the presence of the Imam in public. Just as his holy ancestors; that inspire of

¹ The best book regarding this subject, which has been published and circulated among Shia people is the book of Sayyid Murtada Murtahidi, entitled, *Sahifa Mahdiya*, which is also translated into many languages. We advise all the Shia people who await the reappearance of Imam Zamana (a.s.) to read this book and contemplate upon it and should derive benefit from the etiquette of supplicating and gain proximity to Imam Zamana (a.s.).

them not being present in the world, the whole universe is under their control, in the same way the destiny of the mankind is in his hands and the supplications of the people are accepted because of this Divine Proof.

From this aspect today, when the Imamate belongs to Imam Zamana (a.s.), we seek the mediation of the holy infallibles in our problems; these personalities finally transfer our requests to their descendant, who is the leader of this time. As was the case with Muqaddas Ardibeli (r.a.) when he presented his academic problems before the tomb of Amirul Momineen (a.s.), the latter instructed him to go to Kufa Masjid and inquire from the Imam of his time.¹

Allamah Fazil Mamqani says: I had the honor to be in the presence of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) in the courtyard of Masjidul Haraam; when after the Prayer I mentioned my requests to him, he said:

“Mamqani, this is the time of my son, Mahdi, take your requests to him.”²

In the same way a Shia has narrated that a Sayyid in my neighborhood dreamt that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.), Imam Ali Reza (a.s.) and Imam Asr (a.s.) have come to his house. The Sayyid stood up in respect. Till the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) took his seat, but the two Imams continued to stand. Then Imam Ali Reza (a.s.) complained about the Russians that his Shia were facing hardships because of them and ask him to do something about it. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) said: Today the world is being run by Hujjat Ibnul Hasan, complain to him.³

The conclusion is that on the basis of seeking mediation and assistance from other Imams, one cannot be heedless of Imam

¹ *Biharul Anwar*, 52: 174.

² Mauood, Sh. 18 & 19.

³ *Shaifatgan Hazrat Mahdi*, Vol. 2, Pg. 284.

Zamana (a.s.) and the right of this living, witnessing and kind leader cannot be invalidated from upon us. We should pray to the Imam in every place and in every position and all the time and not remember him only at the time of taking an oath. The Imam is always accessible to us; we should consider his being as the greatest divine bounty and we should not be heedless of maintaining contacts with him. We had mentioned that he has not appointed a clerk to manage his correspondence; therefore whenever you call him, he would be there to help you out. We would find that he most affectionate than a father and more loving than a mother, more proximate than a brother and more loyal than a friend or relative. In spite of all our weakness and defects he is kind to us, because when his enemies are secure because of him and are getting sustenance and breathing, how can he abandon his followers and devotees?

If the position of the Imam is like that of an affectionate father – as it indeed is as such – and we regard ourselves among his children; then naturally as we conduct with respect with our biological father and we speak and behave with him, we can in the same way, speak to our spiritual father always, we can confide with him and we can tell what we would not even mention to our closest confidants. Everyone can present his request to the Imam in his own language and seek the mediation of this divine representative in every problem. The only requirement is to have his remembrance and feeling in his heart and soul and act upon all the duties and put this into practice. “O you who believe! be patient and excel in patience and remain connected...”¹

This verse commands us to maintain contact with Imam Asr (a.s.).

Come, all of us, who were heedless till now, let us begin and first of all seek forgiveness for our past misdoings and then request: If we have all our life, have found means to distress

¹ Surah Aale Imran 3:201.

you; we are still your sinful and guilty children and we love an affectionate father like you and we hope of being forgiven by you and hope that we would earn your pleasure again.

O Imam, who is more affectionate than a father! In spite of all the defects do not keep us deprived of your glance of love and do not leave us in this tumultuous period because this attention of yours is my only support to remain secure from the deception of Satan.

O my great master, your glance is having grace and kindness and is transforming; which has maintained shame and modesty within me due to which I am able to save myself from acts which would distress and humiliate us at the time of your arrival or at during the horrifying time of Qiyamat.

O embodiment of love and affection! Prayer to God that I may perform such acts which earn the satisfaction of God and pleasure you, Ahle Bayt (a.s.) as your pleasure is in fact the pleasure of the Almighty Allah.

Pray for us that we become an embellishment for you and not be a disgrace for you.

Pray to God that we may get the good sense (*Taufeeq*) to understand the depth and weight of your loneliness and victimization. And every moment there should be increase in your love, regard and recognition and day by day there should be hatred towards Your enemies.

Please pray to God not make us heedless of your remembrance even for a moment and give us the good sense to pray for your reappearance and removal of your distress and not to make death be a barrier between us and your reappearance.

My master! Your recognition is a divine bestowal; it is effulgence, which Allah puts in the heart of whoever He likes. Because not every person having books to be educated. From the endless ocean of your recognition give us one drop at a time and

give us the good sense to remain steadfast on your love and recognition.

Imam Asr (a.s.) is the ‘equal of Quran’¹ and ‘one who shows the path of guidance’.² That is why we should search for the straight path in the court of this Wali of God. So that due to this attachment we may not forgo the world and the hereafter and that we may succeed in the divine test.

During this perilous time dangers are growing up in the pretext of our religious beliefs. First of all is the dazzle of the world, its deception, the baser self and finally the conditions of satanic instigation; who has sworn by God to deviate the human beings.

On the other hand when we see the last period of time in the light of traditional reports we notice such complex trials and examinations in which the security of faith is the most difficult job. To remain firm on ones certainty, to have faith in the unseen Imam is seen to be as difficult as sowing mustard on the palm of the hand. In these circumstances patience and steadfastness is more needed than deep faith.

Another danger is that waywardness and unrestrained thinking would become customary where religious doubts and philosophical views would be showcased and where each one will try to sell his wares; wine would be sold in place of water, deviation instead of guidance, disbelief and polytheism in the name of pure faith that is why the report deems such people to be the bandits of religion and beliefs. It should remain clear that to follow such things will not result in anything, except being confused and worried and drowning in the waves of deviation. But in order to leave this path, to achieve salvation and to emerge successful in the tests of the last period of time it is necessary that we should not get caught in the snarl and we

¹ Taali kitabullah.

² Al-Imamud Dai Alal Huda.

should remain attached to the reality as this is the secret of success.

There is no other option except to follow the guidance of the unique one of his time. That is why we cannot compare his and his forefather's traditions to the philosophical schools of thoughts, followers of Sufi sects, claimants of gnosis, improper claimants of scholasticism, that is why we regard the statements of the Holy Imams (a.s.) as the final proof in exegesis of Quran and understanding of Quran, who are equals of Quran, because in this sensitive period of occultation in which it is not possible to reach the Imam directly, it is only the traditions recorded from leaders of faith which are equals of Quran and which are accessible to us whereas those personalities have ordered us to refer to the traditions. Have we in the real sense contemplated over a single report of the infallibles?

Whereas we spend hours on reading newspapers and magazines and watch films and serials; satire and comedy programs and those who are in the fold of culture and literature they continue to repeat the compositions of poets and composers. They contemplate deeply upon it; but it is a pity that they fail to read even single report of the infallibles, whereas the statement of the infallibles is effulgence.¹ And statement of the infallible is the cause of guidance of ideal perfection.² And the tradition of Imam enlivens the heart and soul. Is it not amazing that we spend our life and our valuable time in the talks of common people and are heedless of the statements of the divinely guided leader?

In the deadly storm of the last period of time it is only Imam Asr (a.s.) who is the ark of salvation.³ Then whether in times of hardships, mischiefs and in attacks of Iblees our eyes were focused on the ark of salvation? Or our attention was

¹ Kalamokum Noorun.

² Amrokum Rushdun.

³ Al-Imamo safeenaton Najaat.

caught by his holy being? It is correct that only one who is sinking knows the value of the ark of salvation and who is fighting for his life with the waves; come let us recognize the value of this great blessing.

It is a pity that most of us have forgotten the existence of the ark of salvation; our eyes are not in search of his glimpse at all. Our life and soul is not in welcome of his arrival. We have reposed our confidence on each straw to save us, but we are heedless of the true ark of salvation. Whereas only Imam Asr (a.s.) is the firm refuge¹; he is the helper of the world² and he and harkens to the call of all those who call out to him. It is a pity that we fail to focus our attention on him and to seek his mediation.

If the beggar is slow in asking how can the giver be blamed?

After getting attached to this beloved of all each moment of the life can become the guarantee of salvation and at that time the it will enter the stage of obtaining when we would fully focus our attention to His Eminence, because as long as relationship is maintained with the master till that time there will remain importance of our life and religiosity and we will remain safe from calamities and dangers.

Come, let us become ardent fans of Imam Zamana (a.s.) and every day and night reserve some moments for privacy with him, so that the compass of our life may show towards the pivot of the world and make the people attached to the world of existence. We should make the voice of O Mahdi as blood and make it run in our veins. And then every beat of our heart should say: Al-Ajal (hasten!) or O Baqiyatullah! We should do this at least once, if not for fulfillment of our wish, only for the sake of His Eminence. We should never forget that he is the master of

¹ Al-Kahful Haseen.

² Ghiyasul Muztarril Mustakeen.

the age and the security of the world. We should not regard ourselves as the master of the house as in addition of being the master of the age he is also the master of place. We should not forget that being away from him life is death and that also without his recognition is a death of ignorance. Let us make every moment of the life alive with his remembrance.

Give Sadaqah for the safety of Imam Zamana (a.s.), keep fast, offer sacrifice and mention 'wa ajjil farajahum' with every Salawat, wishing for his reappearance. And saying 'ahlik aduwwahum' and give proof of aloofness from his enemies. Remain eager for his glimpse and count each moment if his arrival.

If we have always been seeking help from the court of Imam Zamana (a.s.) in our difficulties and needs, we should remember him in our happiness as well. We should gather wealth, life and honor for the reappearance of His Eminence; as it is not in fact gathering, it is provision of the hereafter.

We should await in such a way that others should perceive the fragrance of anticipation from us; we should embellish our household with the insurance policy of the master of the age: we should name our children as Mahdi and Mahdiya. You should believe that recognition of Imam Zamana (a.s.) and ideal connection with him is more important than computer class.

Once in while we should take ourselves to Jamkaran, on the contrary we should establish Jamkaran in our hearts and decorate our houses with the remembrance of Mahdi as there is no distance between him and us.

The story of Sayyid Ibne Tawus and Sayyid Bahrul Uloom and Sayyid Karim Peendooz, the old lock maker, Abu Rakhe Hamami, Ustad Ja'far Bandevali and Chinese girl all these persons are sufficient to establish the proof on all. It is important that our every moment should be for pleasing Imam Asr (a.s.). How nice it would have been if we remained attentive to the report of reappearance the call bell of our house should emit the

sound of O Mahdi! We should not only pray for reappearance during prayers in prostration and genuflection. On the contrary we should begin our day with the call for joining the army of the master of the age and begin every Friday anticipating the news of the reappearance of the Imam.

We know that it is possible for the matter of reappearance to be finalized in a moment; that is why the call of *Anaa Baqiyatullah* can echo in the universe at any second. When at the time Asr on Friday the world begins to lament the absence of reappearance, why should we also not lament with the universe? Why the occultation of Imam (a.s.) should be a night of restlessness for us? At the time of the New Year we should adjure God in the name of this ‘changer of the hearts’ that this year He should make us and everyone else attentive to Imam Zamana (a.s.) and also turn the attention of the Imam to us so that our conditions may change for the better.

During this dark period of occultation of Imam Zamana (a.s.) the hearts are beating and the breathing goes on the breasts. Everywhere the traces of life are found. Thus every blessing which is reaching us and every dinner table on which we sit and enjoy the bounties all of them are due to the being of Imam Zamana (a.s.). When the whole world is his guest, we should not forget our benefactor. We are certain that separation is not possible between the Quran and Progeny (*Itrat*). The Book of Allah makes us attentive to the Imam. When we open the Quran, we should not forget the partner of Quran and we should not be like those who say: The Book of Allah is sufficient for us. We should learn the exegesis of Quran from the Speaking Quran of the time.

When we stand up for Prayer, we should keep in mind the statement of: Make our Prayer accepted.¹ And at the time of uttering: And keep us on the straight path, we should keep in

¹ *Mafatihul Jinaan*, Dua Nudbah [O God, make our Prayers accepted through the mediation of Imam Asr (a.s.)].

mind that the straight path of this time is the holy being of Imam (a.s.).

If we have the good fortune of performing the Hajj we should not forget the inner Qibla, the real Hajj is circumambulating around the Imam. The best implication of enjoining good is making the society aware of the Imam of the time and no evil is greater than being heedless of our beloved.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) says in the sermon of Ghadeer:

“O people, I am the straight path of the Almighty Allah, following whom God has commanded and after me is Ali and after him, his descendants from his progeny.”¹

Strengthen the training of your children with his love and polish their minds with the shine of the grace and kindness of His Eminence. Make them fervent devotees of the Imam so that they may be proud of having such an Imam.

Our life should be spent in performance of good deeds and gaining the pleasure of Imam Asr (a.s.). When this happens you can be sure that we would not have to search for the Imam. His Eminence would call us to his presence or he would pray for us. And he would remove evil from us, our family and friends and include us among his special bestowals.

Wilayat is the basis of religion; Prayer, fasting, Hajj and Zakat are secondary issues. The branches cannot make us careless of the roots. In this age the path of guidance and the ark of salvation is the holy being of Hujjat Ibnul Hasan (a.s.). But we should remember that claim of his Wilayat is baseless without hatred towards his enemies.

¹ *Tafsir Burhan*, 1-74.

Effects of Supplications

When some people are told to pray for the reappearance of the Imam they say that when the Almighty Allah wants the Imam would reappear. Another group says expressing despair: The Imam would not arrive so soon. What should we tell these people?

On the basis of traditions the Holy Imams (a.s.) have time and again emphasized to the Shia on praying for the reappearance and have declared that the supplications of people in this regard are definitely effective.

Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) says regarding supplicating for reappearance and its effects:

“When chastisement and calamities increased on Bani Israel, they lamented and supplicated in the court of the Almighty for forty days, then the Almighty Allah sent revelation to Musa and Harun to deliver Bani Israel and He advanced this by 170 years.”

Then Imam (a.s.) said:

“Your case is also such that if you do this, the Almighty Allah would deliver through us; but if not, the matter will reach its destined end.”¹

Sayyid Muhammad Taqi Musawi Isfahani (r.a.) says at one point:

“From the traditional reports that have reached us it is clear that the reappearance of the Imam of the Time is from the affairs that are subject to change (*Bidaya*) – that is it may be advanced or postponed.”²

¹ *Biharul Anwar*, 52:52

² Translation of *Mikyalul Makarim*: 1-34.

At another occasion, Sayyid Muhammad Taqi Musawi Isfahani (r.a.) says:

“When the occultation of Idrees became prolonged, people joined in repentance and turned to Allah. The Almighty Allah, in turn, made him reappear and removed the distress and hardships of the people.

Qaim is also like that; such that if people were to unite in repenting for their sins and have a firm determination to help and support the Imam, the Almighty Allah would make him reappear.”¹

The late Faqih Eimani says:

“It is seen in many supplications, sentences of Ziyarats and also traditional reports that the matter of the reappearance of Imam (a.s.) is a definite and unchangeable promise of the Almighty Allah, but the time of fulfillment of this promise is not having a fixed time which can be postponed or advanced. It is also proved through some reports that if the supplications of believers fulfill all the conditions and requirements they would definitely be effective in hastening reappearance.”²

Encouragement of the Imams for praying for reappearance shows that though a time is fixed for it (reappearance); it is subject to change also. It is correct that occultation is a divine secret and there is definitely an appointed time for reappearance, but it is in any case possible that the reappearance may be advanced or it can be further delayed and this belief is also not opposed to the fundamental belief of the Shia about ‘Badaa’ (change of destiny)³.

¹ Translation of *Mikyalul Makarim*: 1-34.

² *Shewa Yaari Qaim Aale Muhammad (a.s.)*, Pg. 75.

³ The dictionary meaning of *Bada* is to become apparent and in the Shia terminology, it is a destiny which is subject to change. Believing in Bada emphasizes two facts (1) The Almighty Allah is the absolute supreme one and He is not helpless in changing destined matters. (2)

The late Allamah Majlisi (r.a.) explains the traditional reports about Dua and narrates from Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) as follows:

“Supplicate and do not say that its time has passed and now what is destined will happen.”¹

In its explanation, Allamah Majlisi says:

“It is necessary to believe in *Badaa*, because Allah, the mighty and high is powerful over the issues of each day. That is why He erases whatever He likes and establishes whatever He likes. That is why destiny is not an obstacle of supplications, because change is possible in the tablet. Apart from this, supplication itself is from the causes of destiny that is why we are commanded to supplicate.”²

On the contrary, it is clear that if we are heedless of the prolongation of the occultation of the Imam of our time and the issues of occultation and do not in a united way, express the desire for his reappearance, the Almighty Allah will make the reappearance to occur at its latest hour; although it is possible that the latest hour may also arrive. That is why we cannot on any occasion fix a time for his reappearance and that is why those who fix a time for his reappearance are condemned and falsified. But other than this there are numerous reports, which inform the believers that the time of reappearance is near and hint that one should not be heedless in supplicating for reappearance.

Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) says:

Man is also not helpless due to the destined matters; on the contrary the path of deliverance is open for him and through performance of good deeds, he can change his destiny.

¹ *Usul Kafi*, 2-466, (Kitabud Dua, Chapter of excellence of Dua, Vol. 3).

² Translation of *Sharh Usul Kafi*, 4-21.

“Wait for the reappearance every morning and evening.”¹

Imam Ali Reza (a.s.) also remarks:

“It is not except that the matter of reappearance (like Qiyamat) would appear suddenly for you.”²

Imam Ali Naqi (a.s.) says:

“Indeed the Almighty Allah would reform his affairs overnight.”³

We are duty bound to regard the reappearance as near; as following the Quran, we recite in Dua Nudba:

“Please hasten his advent as people regard it to be far and we know it to be near.”

Once in Bahrain, the Shia came under great stress, due to which they asked from the Nasibi ruler of that place respite for three days, so that they might pray to Imam Asr (a.s.) and beseech him to solve their problem. During the first two nights the representatives of Shia cannot obtain any results. At the dawn of the third night, Muhammad bin Isa (r.a.) was bestowed the good fortune of the presence of Imam Zamana (a.s.) in which the Imam solved the enigma of the pomegranate and exposed the fraud of the minister.

An important point of this anecdote is that when Muhammad bin Isa asked the Imam why he did not appear on the first or the second night, Imam (a.s.) replied:

“If you had asked for respite of only one night, you would have achieved your objective that night only.”⁴

¹ *Biharul Anwar*: 52-185.

² *Kamaluddin*, 2:373, Chapter 35, Tr. 6.

³ *Kamaluddin*, 2:377, Chapter 36, Tr. 1.

⁴ *Darus Salam*, Iraqi, 92.

Indeed, you are the protector and the refuge, the acceptor of requests and the remover of grief and sorrow and he is dispeller of distress.

No refuge is more stable than him and neither is any helper more sincere and kinder than him. No supporter is stronger than him and no hand is nobler and generous than him. Come let us all together request God:

“And change his fear into security.”¹

The Yusuf (beloved) of Lady Fatima Zahra (s.a.) is since the last 1167 years in such a prison which the heedlessness of Shia, disobedience of people and ignorance of deviations and denial and apostasy, selfishness, power-hunger and is constructed by the killings of the tyranny of the world the key of whose lock is in our own hands. Come let us together pray for the reappearance:

O God, among the Ahle Bayt (a.s.) we have not seen anyone as distressed as Lady Zainab Kubra (s.a.) in the mirror of the eleventh eve of Mohurrum. I adjure You in the name of the oppressed aunt of Imam Asr (a.s.) circling around the chief of those who prostrate (*Sayyidus Sajideen*). The hurrying of the lady to the burnt-down tents and adjure You by her running to the Al-Qama stream. I adjure You by their wails of those orphans who were thrashed by the lashes of the enemies and running to take refuge with their aunt. I adjure You by the Midnight Prayer recited sitting by Lady Zainab (s.a.) the night after Ashura, 61 A.H. and by her tied up hands and wounded forehead, please hasten the reappearance of the avenger of the folks of the cloak.

O Lord, Prophet Yaqub (a.s.) continued to weep for forty years because of separation of his son, till the pupils of his eyes turned white, but at last when he met Yusuf his vision was restored. O Lord, neither do we possess cognition, like that of

¹ *Biharul Anwar*, 89:251.

Yaqub nor love like him. Please forgive our heedlessness, I adjure you by the honorable mother of the Imam, Lady Zahra (s.a.), please bestow to the Yusuf of Zahra freedom from the prison of occultation.

“O God, do not deprive us of certainty due to the lengthening of the period of occultation and because of unawareness about our master and do not take away the good sense regarding his remembrance, his awaiting and faith on him, certainty in his reappearance, praying for him and invoking blessings on him.”¹

O One who exalts whoever He likes!

Through the rising of Imam Zamana (a.s.) maintain the respect and honor of Ahle Bayt (a.s.) and the true Shia.

O One who degrades whoever He likes!

By issuing the command for reappearance, expose the degradation of the infidels and hypocrites.

O Lord, do not make note of our negative acts, I adjure by Your great name, by the verses of Your Quran, by the speaking Qurans, issue the command of the reappearance of Imam Zamana (a.s.) this very moment.

O the most hearing from those who hear! Please accept our supplications and cancel the remaining period of occultation for the sake of the sanctity of Aale Muhammad (a.s.) and spread the call of ‘I am Baqiyatullah’ in each corner of the world.

The End

¹ *Mafatihul Jinaan* (Ziyarat Sahibul Amr): Allahumma laa Taslunba yaqeen litooolil amad.